# THE AFTERMATH OF WAR

G·B·BEAK




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# THE AFTERMATH OF WAR



The Vaal River near Venterskroon



The Orange River near Aliwal North.

THE

# AFTERMATH OF WAR

AN ACCOUNT OF THE REPATRIATION OF BOERS AND NATIVES IN THE ORANGE RIVER COLONY

1902–1904

BY

G. B. BEAK

*WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAP*

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# PREFATORY NOTE

This volume is chiefly based on impressions gained in South Africa in the course of five years' service, from 1900 to 1904, firstly as an Intelligence, and secondly as a Repatriation Officer. By the courtesy of the Orange River Colony Administration, Government documents have been freely placed at my disposal for the purpose of its compilation. The account given is, however, in no sense of the word official, and I must accept entire responsibility for the conclusions drawn and the opinions expressed therein.

The book has been written with a twofold object. On the one hand it is an attempt to describe not only the generosity and the liberality of the repatriation scheme, but also to indicate the exceptional difficulties under which that scheme was carried out. On the other hand it is an endeavour to vindicate those engaged in the task of repatriation from the charges of waste and extravagance which have been recklessly brought against them. I have not hesitated, however, to criticise very freely the department to which I had the honour to belong, and I have striven throughout to give a strictly impartial record of its work. This record is that of an eye-witness—of one whose impressions of the Dutch, however erroneous they may be, are based, not on hearsay, but on actual intercourse both in war and peace.



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I have for the most part confined myself to the particular subject under consideration, but the book may be found to contain a certain amount of information—of practical utility to intending emigrants and of interest to students of South African politics—concerning a Colony whose fate at the present moment hangs strangely in the balance.

G. B. BEAK.

Oxford, 1906.

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# THE AFTERMATH OF WAR

## CHAPTER I

### DEVASTATION

'Cry "Havock!" and let slip the dogs of war.'—SHAKESPEARE.

'Lordinges (quod he), ther is ful many a man that crieth "Werre, Werre," that wote ful litel what werre amounteth.'—CHAUCER.

'Ohne den Krieg würde die Welt in Materialismus versumpfen.'
VON MOLTKE.

POSSIBLY no contest was ever fought with more humanity than the late South African war, to which this volume is a sequel. And yet causes of complaint between the combatants, which have been prominent in every other war, were not absent from this. It is unnecessary, and probably futile, to enter into a discussion of individual acts of treachery and cruelty alleged by either side and given undue prominence in the newspapers of both countries. It must be remembered that the battle-field is hardly the place whence impartial criticism can be expected to emanate, and, oddly enough, 'war breeds animosity against justice, more especially amongst those who take no part therein.'[1] Causes of complaint there have been, and always will be so long as the sword is the final arbiter to which human nature appeals.

How very far-fetched were the majority of charges[2] brought

[1] *Vide* in this connection, 'Usages of War in South Africa,' by John Macdonell, C.B., *Nineteenth Century*, December, 1900.

[2] The following is a specimen quoted by Mr. Macdonell: 'Presque journellement des nouvelles de violations graves des lois de la guerre nous parviennent. Des témoins oculaires sont venus nous dire qu'à Elands-

by the ill-informed continental press against British officers and British soldiers will be clear to anyone who cares to read Blue-Books already published on the subject, and who takes the trouble to question those who participated in the contest.[1]

The code promulgated from the Hague in 1899, and ratified in September, 1900, may be regarded as the latest expression of civilized opinion on the usages of war. But it is not

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laagte on a percé aux lances des hommes inoffensifs, qui avaient jeté bas les armes et levé les mains en signe de se rendre, et qu'on a dépouillé les pauvres blessés qui gisaient sur les champs de bataille de leurs montres, de leurs bourses, et même de leurs habits, comme c'est arrivé entre autres avec le Général Kock; que l'on a laissé massacrer les habitants du pays enemi par les Linchive-Caffres à Derdepoort; qu'on a assujetti les prisonniers aux jeux monstrueux de 'pig-sticking' et de 'lemon-cutting,' comme l'a déclaré sous serment un prisonnier évadé, nommé Kannemeyer; que l'on a tué raide des prisonniers qui s'indignaient de la manière inhumaine avec laquelle on traînait vers Boshof, après le combat dans lequel le brave Colonel de Villebois-Mareuil fut tué, des prisonniers français et autres, quoique grièvement blessés, liés aux chevaux pendant des heures jusqu'à qu'ils s'affaissaient.'

Here is another from a different source : 'Aidés par des Cafres chargés de maintenir leurs victimes, les soldats anglais auraient violé des femmes et des jeunes filles, auxquelles ils auraient communiqué la syphilis qui, comme on le sait, ravage l'armée britannique dans l'Hindoustan' (*Gazette de Francfort*, du 24 Janvier, 1900).

[1] *Vide* 'Krigserfarenheter van Boerkriget,' by Captain Wester. 'Captain Wester protests vigorously against the aspersions cast on the conduct of the British troops in South Africa; he did not see a single instance of any infraction of the laws and customs of war, and was filled with admiration at the magnanimity and humanity of the men under very trying circumstances, while he considers British officers to be "above all, gentlemen in the truest sense of the word"' (*The Times*).

'The inhabitants of Ladybrand, of various nationalities, having heard the statements made by a section in England and by the press on the Continent of Europe, charging the British soldier in South Africa with cruelty and barbarism towards women and children, and knowing this to be totally unfounded, feel in duty bound to emphatically contradict such accusations, and stigmatize them as vile slanders' (Meeting at Ladybrand, February 28, 1902).

'That this meeting, comprising as it does people residing in Winburg, O.R.C., of various nationalities and of every shade of political opinion, and who have an intimate knowledge of every phase of the South African War, from the commencement of hostilities to the present time, emphatically and indignantly protests against the gross slanders and infamous fabrications circulated by the continental press against the valour, honour, and humanity of the British troops, and further, this meeting desires to record its opinion that the conduct of the British soldiers, throughout the campaign, has been in every respect exemplary' (Meeting at Winburg, February, 1902).

in reality applicable to the Boer war, because the late republics 'were neither signatories to the convention nor had given in their adhesion.' In her post-war policy, however, Great Britain has evidently striven to give the vanquished every possible benefit of the international agreement, and it may be, therefore, useful to note what rules the Hague Convention lays down on the subject of devastation. Articles 23 and 50, the most important ones in this connection, are worded as follows: 'Article 23.—In addition to the prohibitions established by special conventions, it is particularly forbidden . . . (*g*) To destroy or seize the enemy's property unless such destruction or seizure be imperatively required by the necessities of war.' 'Article 50.—No general penalty, pecuniary or otherwise, may be inflicted on the population on account of the acts of individuals for which it cannot be regarded as collectively responsible.'[1] These articles are the expression of civilized opinion. It may be interesting to trace to what extent they were violated, and, if it be found that they were violated, what plea is forthcoming to justify their violation.

It is evident that, at the commencement of the war, the destruction of property was neither contemplated by the British nor condoned by the Boers. A proclamation issued by Lord Roberts on March 26, 1900, reads as follows: 'Notice is hereby given that all persons who within the territories of the South African Republic and Orange Free State shall authorize or be guilty of the wanton destruction or damage—or the counselling, aiding, or assisting in the wanton destruction or damage—of public or private property, such destruction or damage not being justified by the usages and customs of civilized warfare, will be held responsible in

[1] This article was, apparently, contravened by Section 6 of Proclamation No. 6 of 1900: 'Where any damage is done to the railway a fine of 2s. 6d. per morgen will be levied on the area of the farm or farms on which the damage is done, and the farms in the immediate neighbourhood of the damaged place may also, if I deem fit, be subjected to a similar fine.' This proclamation was, so far as can be traced, enforced in five cases, all in the Winburg district, and in every one of these the fine imposed was later either wholly or partially refunded.

their persons and property for all such wanton destruction and damage.'[1] Yet, early in February, 1900, the Governments of the republics had complained of damage done by the British soldiery, and on February 12 Lord Roberts had called their attention to the destruction by Boers of farmhouses in Natal.[2] A somewhat acrimonious correspondence as to the usages of civilized warfare continued for some months. This was not unnatural. 'War is cruelty, and you cannot refine it,' said a soldier whose practice agreed with his maxim. 'War is war, and not popularity hunting,' says Grant. 'War is hellish work' is Napier's description of it. 'There is no clear *via media* between peace and war,' remarks a recent writer; 'when the dogs of war are let loose, the cry is havoc.'[3]

On May 20, 1900, Lord Roberts admitted having ordered the destruction of two farms in the Bloemfontein district 'because, while a white flag was flying from the houses, his troops were fired upon from the farmsteads'; and he stated that 'he should continue to punish all such cases of treachery by the destruction of the farms where they occurred.'[4] This is quite in accordance with the usages of modern warfare. 'He who allows his house to be used as a *place d'armes*, a fortress from which to fire upon the enemy, must, according to military usage, expect to have his house burned.' There were doubtless many cases of hardship, because very frequently the owner was not consulted, and he could do little or nothing to prevent his house being so utilized by a Boer commando.[5]

On September 2, 1900, the Commander-in-Chief telegraphed to Commandant General Botha that orders had been given

[1] Proclamation, March 26, 1900, Cd. 582.
[2] Cd. 582.
[3] *Nineteenth Century*, December, 1900.
[4] Cd. 582.
[5] 'Much has been said of Boers firing on British soldiers from farms which flew the white flag. What actually happened again and again was that women and non-combatants flew the white flag on a homestead, and that armed Boers carried on hostile operations on other parts of such farms without any regard to the doings of those in the farmhouse' (*Morning Leader*, September, 1900).

that the farm nearest the scene of any attempt to injure the line or wreck a train was to be burned, and that all farms within a radius of ten miles were to be cleared of all their stock, supplies, etc.[1]

A precedent may be found for the above in an order issued by General Sherman on November 9, 1864, which is worded as follows: 'In districts and neighbourhoods where the army is unmolested no destruction of property should be permitted; but should guerillas or bushwhackers molest our march, or should the inhabitants burn bridges, obstruct roads, or otherwise manifest local hostility, the army commanders should order and enforce demolitions more or less relentless according to the measure of such hostility.'[2]

By October, 1900, the war on the Boer side was considered to have degenerated into operations carried on by irregular, irresponsible guerillas. The organization of the Boer army was primitive, but such as it was it was in force until the end. Laxity of discipline is the continual complaint of De Wet and other leaders, and the commandants were severely handicapped thereby.[3] In answer to a telegram from General Botha, urging that the republican forces were still perfectly organized, Lord Roberts pointed out that their tactics were not those usually associated with organized forces, but had degenerated into a guerilla warfare, which he would be compelled to repress by those exceptional methods which civilized nations had at all times found it necessary to use under like circumstances.[4]

[1] Cd. 582. This was in accordance with the proclamation of June 19, 1900. This proclamation again conformed to the usages of civilized warfare (*vide* Lawrence, pp. 377 and 378).

[2] In 1871 the German Governor of Lorraine ordered, 'in consequence of the destruction of the bridge of Fontenoy to the east of Toul, that the district included in the Governor-Generalship of Lorraine should pay an extraordinary contribution of 10,000,000 francs by way of fine, and announced that the village of Fontenoy had been immediately burned' (Hall, § 156).

[3] 'The Boer discipline must have been a curious growth, and when we realize the intense individualism of the fighting men, we begin to see the greatness of the achievement of Botha and Delarey in keeping them together at all' ('The African Colony').

[4] Lord Roberts 'was unable to see that the Boers, being essentially a nation of farmers, would regard with comparative equanimity the loss of

Roughly, from this date onwards, then, may be said to have commenced that series of exceptional measures which were destined finally to bring the republican leaders to their senses, and that 'process of attrition' which was to culminate, after more than a year and a half of march and countermarch, in the terms of Vereeniging. It was at this period

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their towns, largely the resort of races alien to themselves. . . . When those towns were gone, he persisted in believing that it was contrary to the usages of war for his enemy to remain in arms. Hence his mistaken resolve to treat, not as regular combatants, but as rebels, who required punishment rather than defeat, a white race defending their homes with a bravery and resource which have rightly won the admiration of the world' (*The Times* 'History of the War in South Africa,' vol iv.).

The following would appear to cover the case in point. It does not, however, confound skedaddling and flight with bravery and defence, as *The Times* historian appears to have done: 'On the other hand, one speaks of guerilla war or petty war when, after the defeat and the capture of the main part of the enemy forces, the occupation of the enemy territory, and the downfall of the enemy Government, the routed remnants of the defeated army carry on the contention by mere guerilla tactics. Although hopeless of success in the end, such petty war can go on for a long time, thus preventing the establishment of a state of peace in spite of the fact that regular war is over and the task of the army of occupation is no longer regular warfare. Now, the question whether such guerilla war is real war in the strict sense of the term in international law must, I think, be answered in the negative for two reasons: First, there are no longer the forces of two States in the field, because the defeated belligerent State has ceased to exist through the military occupation of its territory, the downfall of its established Government, the capture of the main part, and the routing of the remnant, of its forces; and, secondly, there is no longer a contention between armed forces in progress. For although the guerilla bands are still fighting when attacked, or when attacking small bodies of enemy soldiers, they try to avoid a pitched battle, and content themselves with the constant harassing of the victorious army, the destroying of bridges and railways, cutting off communications and supplies, attacking convoys, and the like, always in the hope that some event or events may occur which will induce the victorious army to withdraw from the conquered territory. But if guerilla war is not real war, it is obvious that in strict law the victor need no longer treat the guerilla bands as a belligerent Power and the captured members of those bands as soldiers. It is, however, not advisable that the victor should cease such treatment as long as those bands are under responsible commanders, and observe themselves the laws and usages of war. For I can see no advantage or reason why, although in strict law it could be done, those bands should be treated as criminals. Such treatment would only call for acts of revenge on their part, without in the least accelerating the pacification of the country. And it is, after all, to be taken into consideration that these bands act, not out of criminal, but patriotic motives. With patience and firmness the victor will succeed in pacifying these bands without recourse to methods of harshness' (Oppenheim, vol. ii., p. 67).

that the war entered upon a stage not wholly anticipated or provided for by International Law.

In the preamble to the Hague Convention it is stated: 'These provisions, the wording of which has been inspired by the desire to diminish the evils of war, so far as military necessities permit, are destined to serve as general rules of conduct for belligerents in their relations with each other and with populations. It has not, however, been possible to agree forthwith on provisions embracing all the circumstances which may occur in practice.' The code is avowedly incomplete; it expressly excepts military necessities, and it contemplates additions to meet unforeseen contingencies. Of military necessity the man on the spot must admittedly be the best judge, and it is not therefore surprising to find both combatants defending their actions on this ground.[1]

The situation in South Africa at this time was not altogether unforeseen, but it was really an extremely difficult one for which to provide. A fruitful source of dissension in past wars has been confusion as to the nature of military occupation. The Boer army had been overthrown in the mass, and the capitals of the two States taken, but powerful bands, still unsubdued, were roving about freely, and towns occupied by the British one day were evacuated the next.[2] The theatre of

[1] *Vide* telegram: 'From State President, O.F.S., and State President, S.A.R., sent from Bloemfontein 9.20 p.m., February 19, 1900, to H.E. Lord Roberts, Cape Town. With regard to the sending away of certain of Her Majesty's subjects from their dwellings to beyond the lines of those parts of the country occupied by the Burgher forces, we can affirm to your Excellency that the instances where such—and that only quite recently—has occurred, it was necessary *in the interests of our military operations*, as in all instances there was at least strong presumption existing that they did not behave themselves quietly and occupy themselves solely with their daily avocations, but either themselves acted as spies, or assisted spies to make our movements known to the enemy.'

*Cf.* also reply of Lord Roberts, dated Paardeberg, Febuary 24, 1900, whence the following is extracted: 'I, however, am fully convinced that no wilful destruction of property has taken place except such as was absolutely necessary for *military purposes*.'

[2] 'I am told,' reported the R.M. Senekal at a later date, 'that during the war every citizen, on rising in the morning, was wont to go and see which flag was flying over the Court-house, to ascertain if an admiration of the Union Jack or Vier-Kleur would be most acceptable to the authorities there.'

war was too extensive for the British ever to expect, without employing exceptional measures, to cope with an enemy who had adopted guerilla tactics. The fighting area had to be reduced. Diminution of territory involved not only the removal of the inhabitants—a subject which will be dealt with later—but also the destruction of property and the clearance of supplies.

It was the widespread destruction of farmhouses, and wholesale devastation in certain specified areas, which called forth such a storm of adverse criticism. And yet, in view of the Hague Convention, such criticism would appear to be unnecessary. All the rules adopted at the Hague are prefaced by the qualification, 'autant que les nécessités militaires le permettent.' And 'military necessity' includes many things. Lieber, in his definition, admits that 'it allows of all destruction of property, and obstruction of the ways and channels of traffic, travel, or communication, and of all withholding of sustenance or means of life from the enemy, of the appropriation of whatever an enemy's country affords necessary for the sustenance and safety of the army.'[1] The definition of the term 'lay waste,' drafted by General Sir Archibald Hunter, and approved by Lord Roberts, was no less comprehensive, and entered more into detail. Civilized opinion, then, as expressed at the Hague, acknowledges devastation to be legitimate under certain circumstances, and holds that the question of the necessity for such devastation must be decided by the accredited representatives of the belligerents themselves.[2]

The main difficulty in the situation at the close of 1900 from the British point of view, and for the Boers the main

[1] See also General von Hartmann's 'Militärische Nothwendigkeit und Humanität.'

[2] As a matter of fact, 'the private movable property of the inhabitants of an enemy's country was always at the mercy of the invader, and liable to destruction or pillage, and it only came to be spared when the invader saw that such a course was for his advantage. Wholesale pillage undermines the discipline of troops, and to destroy the crops of a country is to cut off supplies from the invading force as well as from the inhabitants' 'Law of War,' J. S. Risley, p. 139).

source of hope, lay in the fact that a sort of general running fight, apparently of indefinite duration, was being carried on throughout the length and breadth of the recently annexed republics. It was obvious that, if the federal forces were ever to be overcome, the theatre of war must be curtailed. The commandos were scattered over so large a tract of territory, and Great Britain had, consequently, to divide her forces to such an extent, that they were unable to cope adequately with the Boers in any one district. So long as the Boers were able to continue the struggle in every district, victory for the British seemed indefinitely postponed. But if the enemy could be compelled to abandon certain areas, and to concentrate on certain points, then victory was assured to the British by sheer force of numbers, if by nothing else. To compel the republican forces to evacuate certain districts, and to concentrate in certain others, was the object with which the clearing of the country was commenced.

To assign anything like a definite date for the beginning of devastation in the Orange River Colony is somewhat difficult. A few farmhouses were burned for specific reasons during the earlier stages of the war; this particular form of destruction may probably be said to have reached its zenith between the months of June and November, 1900.[1]

It is true that it called forth a storm of hostile criticism from both the home and continental press. This was almost to be expected. The 'consummation devoutly to be wished' —namely, the conclusion of the war—was for the moment lost sight of in the measures adopted to bring it about. The barren veldt, the absent sire, the weeping women, the homeless little ones, all combined to form a picture which appealed to the heart of the general public, and which was, consequently, fully treated by the descriptive and imaginative war correspondent. The majority of Boer farmhouses are,

[1] 'With Rimington,' Letter XXIII., dated Kroonstad, September 6, 1900: 'The various columns that are now marching about the country are carrying on the work of destruction pretty indiscriminately, and we have burnt and destroyed by now many scores of farms.'

however, to the more prosaic mind, unimportant from an economic standpoint; and their destruction, so long as the crops, herds, and flocks were left untouched, did not materially affect the sinews of war.[1] There is little exact information to be obtained from Blue-Books on the subject of farm burning. The only period covered by the Government return is from June, 1900, to January, 1901.[2] During that time 352 farm-houses were burnt by the British. There are no data to show what amount of destruction was done by the Boers, but they lived on the country through which they passed, ransacking most of the outlying stores; and the claims which were later submitted in this connection go to prove that it was fairly extensive.

But, whatever the amount of damage to property done by both combatants may have been, the chief drawback to such clearing as had hitherto been accomplished lay in the fact that it was absolutely unsystematic. It was carried out in a casual, whimsical sort of a way, with no pretentions to either method or consistency.[3] In the true spirit of martial law

[1] 'Indeed, the loss of crops and stock is a far more serious matter than the destruction of farm buildings, of which so much has been heard' (Sir A. Milner to Mr. Chamberlain, Cd. 547).

'Stench, flies, dust, discomfort, dirt—these are the almost universal characteristics of the Boer's home within. Without it is a plain, rough-baked brick or mud-walled, oblong structure, roofed with corrugated iron, and devoid of the smallest attempt at architectural beauty. The stoep or veranda shades at least one side of the house, possibly a willow or a gum-tree or two hard by; rarely, very rarely, there is a ring-fenced plot of garden, wherein unkempt rose-bushes eke out a forlorn existence' ('A Subaltern's Letters to His Wife,' p. 95).

[2] Cd. 524. This return cannot be considered complete even for the period mentioned, and Mr. Chamberlain's later estimate (*vide The Times* for March 5, 1902) of 600 is probably far below the actual figure.

The author's estimate, based on work with the Eighth Division during the war, reports received immediately after the conclusion of peace, and repeated tours throughout the colony, is that 75 per cent. of the farm-houses suffered more or less severely, and that 5,000 were practically destroyed.

[3] 'Kroonstad, Lindley, Heilbron, Frankfort, has been our round so far. We now turn westward along the south of the Vaal. Farm burning goes merrily on, and our course through the country is marked, as in pre-historic ages, by pillars of smoke by day and fire by night. We usually burn from six to a dozen farms a day, these being about all that in this sparsely-inhabited country we encounter. I do not gather that any special

every column commander did that which was right in his own eyes.[1] No distinct general orders had been published on the subject, and a considerable amount of confusion was the natural result. By November, 1900, farm burning had become so indiscriminate that it was found necessary to issue instructions defining its limitations.

These were contained in Order XL., dated November 18.[2] 'As there appears to be some misunderstanding with reference to burning of farms and breaking of dams, Commander-in-Chief wishes following to be lines on which General Officers Commanding are to act: No farm is to be burnt except in case of treachery or when troops have been fired on from premises, or as punishment for breaking of telegraph or railway line, or when they have been used as bases of operations for raids, and then only with direct consent of General Officer Commanding, which is to be given in writing. The mere fact of a burgher being absent on commando is on no account to be used as reason for burning the house. All cattle, waggons, and food-stuffs are to be removed from all farms; if that is found to be impossible, they are to be destroyed, whether owner be present or not.'

It is not improbable that this order was in response to the outcry from home, and its issue may have been a sop to Exeter Hall. Its wording is sufficiently clear, and it was evidently intended that practically everything on the farms was either to be destroyed or removed except the actual buildings. Unfortunately, however, it acted for a time as a check in the Orange River Colony to all clearing work whatever.

And yet the process of devastation was in itself beset with

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reason or cause is alleged or proved against the farms burnt. If Boers have used the farm; if the owner is on commando; if the line within a certain distance has been blown up; or even if there are Boers in the neighbourhood who persist in fighting—these are some of the reasons' ('With Rimington,' Letter XXIV., p. 201).

[1] The Duke of Wellington, in a speech delivered on April 1, 1851, defined martial law to be 'neither more nor less than the will of the General who commands the army' (Field, 'International Code,' 2nd edit., p. 478).

[2] Cd. 426.

too many difficulties to need any check of this kind. The country to be cleared was some 50,000 square miles in extent, thinly populated, with villages lying 40 or 50 miles apart, and farms usually located in sequestered valleys far off the main tracks. The trek from one homestead to another meant, in some districts, half a day's march. The actual number of farms was 11,772. The 'illimitable veldt,' to the casual observer so barren, will be found, when traversed, to contain spruits, sluits, dongas, into which cattle and sheep may be driven; and the kopjes possess kloofs and hoeks where animals may be sheltered and concealed from any but the keenest and most minute search. Columns which for many months seldom departed from the main tracks could hardly expect to escape the eye of the farmer or the still keener eye of the kaffir herd. The stock was hastily taken to a place of hiding previously agreed upon, until the column had passed on its way to report 'clear.'

It took even the highest authorities on the British side a considerable time to realize the importance of consistent and thorough devastation. The mobility of the Boer was, to the last, superior to our own. And yet the work of clearance was expected to be carried out in conjunction with the pursuit of the paarde commando. Column commanders remonstrated that they could not do both simultaneously. They were continually wavering between clearing a district and the pursuit of a vanishing foe. More kudos was to be gained by the capture of De Wet than by the trampling down of a mealie crop. The frequent result of such hesitation was that the Boer commando escaped, and the district was left practically untouched.

Moreover, clearing work was disliked by both officers and men, who considered, and perhaps not unreasonably, that their main business was fighting and not devastation. Column commanders frequently failed to carry out to the letter the stringent orders issued from army headquarters to clear the country of 'every living thing,' and it is to be feared that junior officers and men were not always sufficiently keen to discover the

whereabouts of hidden stock and supplies. 'The destruction of property is most distasteful to me,' wrote Lord Roberts.[1] 'That the task assigned to them was in most cases uncongenial seems evident from the feeling often expressed in the rough descriptions of the soldiers.'[2]

During the latter part of 1900 and the early months of 1901 the British army appeared totally unable to cope with the mode of guerilla warfare then recently adopted by the Federal forces.[3] Lord Kitchener succeeded Lord Roberts on November 30, 1900, but some months elapsed before the new Commander-in-Chief could put into practice his own plan of campaign, the chief features of which were the devastation of certain areas and the gradual extension of the blockhouse system. From November until March practically no progress was made. This period, indeed, includes Bothaville; but it is also marked by 'regrettable incidents' at Helvetia and Dewetsdorp, and by the second invasion of Cape Colony. However much De Wet and his followers may have suffered in this invasion, there is no gainsaying the fact that it was an assumption of the offensive on the part of the Boer forces after the British public had been led to believe that the war was practically over. This state of affairs, if not critical, was avowedly somewhat disconcerting. The following extract from a letter addressed by President Steyn to Lord Kitchener gives succinctly the Boer view of the situation:[4]

[1] *Vide* Cd. 582. Lord Roberts to General de Wet, dated Pretoria, August 3, 1900.

[2] 'The Brunt of the War,' by Emily Hobhouse. 'I have been out with a column, and it is sickening work. We burn every farm we come to, and bring the women and children to the refugee camps. No matter where we go we burn the crop, leaving nothing but a waste of country behind us' (*New Age*, August, 1901).

[3] 'La vérité d'ensemble finissait cependant par se dégager à peu près de cette incessante et fastidieuse série de communications officielles: c'est que l'armée britannique, harcélée de toutes parts, épuissée par des déplacements continuels et pénibles pour tâcher d'envelopper un ennemi insaisissable, perdait du terrain plutôt qu'elle n'en gagnait, et fondait peu à peu malgré les renforts qui lui étaient envoyés' (Despagnet, 'La Guerre Sud-Africaine au point de vue du Droit International,' p. 325).

It was during this period that the late Lord Salisbury, speaking of the war, let drop the ominous sentence: 'We do not know where we are!'

[4] Cd. 903. Enclosure 2 in 36, dated March 21, 1901.

'A year ago, after the surrender of General Prinsloo, the Cape Colony was altogether peaceful and free from our commandos.[1] The Orange Free State was almost totally in your hands—not alone capital, railway-line, and other towns, but also the whole of the country, except where Commandant Haasbroek was with his commando; and it was almost the same with the South African Republic. That country was altogether in your hands excepting where General Delarey was with his commando and General Botha with his in the back-country, the Boschveldt. How do matters stand to-day? The Cape Colony is, so to speak, filled with our commandos, and they are in reality in possession of the greater part of that colony, and trek about as they wish, and we have continually many of our race and others joining us, thereby protesting against the gross injustice done to the republics. In the Orange Free State I freely acknowledge that your Excellency is in possession of the capital, railways, and a few other towns not lying on the railway, but that is the extent of your possessions.'

This may appear at first sight a prejudiced account, but it is in some degree corroborated by Lord Milner's despatch[2] of February 25, 1901, which points out, *inter alia*, how inevitable devastation was. 'It is no use denying,' wrote Lord Milner, reviewing the same period, 'that the last half-year has been one of retrogression. . . . The fact that the enemy are now broken up into a great number of small forces, raiding in every direction, and that our troops are similarly broken up in pursuit of them, makes the area of actual fighting, and consequently destruction, much wider than it would be in the case of a conflict between equal numbers operating in large masses. Moreover, the fight is now mainly over supplies. The Boers live entirely on the country through which they pass, not only taking all the food they can lay hands upon on the farms—grain, forage, cattle, etc.—but looting the small village stores for clothes, boots, coffee, sugar, etc., of all

[1] General Prinsloo surrendered on July 29, 1900.
[2] Cd. 547. Sir A. Milner to Mr. Chamberlain.

which they are in great need. Our forces, on their side, are compelled to denude the country of everything movable in order to frustrate these tactics of the enemy.'

These two extracts are of importance in showing, firstly, that the Boers had hit upon a method of fighting for which both they and their country were specially adapted, that they had found this method to pay, and that they, consequently, were not likely to relinquish it. Secondly, it is clear, on Lord Milner's own showing, that the policy of devastation was forced upon the invaders. The principle of justification is not here in question, for that may be left to the old plea of military exigencies. But to devastate a country which she had determined to conquer and hold was obviously not in Great Britain's interests, and she, therefore, avoided so disastrous a measure as long as she possibly could. Six months of dilly-dallying, however, bore fruit. The time for sterner measures had now arrived, and the new Commander-in-Chief was the man, so far as clearing was concerned, to evolve order out of chaos.

In his despatch dealing with the progress of the war for March, 1901, Lord Kitchener wrote: 'I decided to subdivide the colony into four districts, each one under the control of a General Officer, whose special duty it should be to deal promptly with any concentration of the enemy and to *clear the country systematically of all horses, cattle, and supplies.*'[1] Already devastation was considered the normal, combating concentration of the enemy the abnormal, occupation of a column. The one was continuous, the other periodical. The work of clearing was begun in earnest all over the Orange River Colony. 'Throughout the month of May,' Lord Kitchener stated, 'Sir Leslie Rundle's troops were employed in clearing the numerous Boer supply depots hidden in the remote valleys between Fouriesburg and Ficksburg.' Meanwhile the blockhouse system, which had hitherto been confined to the protection of the railway-line, was 'extended to the protection of areas in conjunction with the establishment

[1] Cd. 605.

of lines which divided up the country outside those areas.'[1]

The new plan of campaign involved a considerable amount of reorganization. Divisions had been split up into brigades as the Boer force was reduced in numbers. These in turn were now replaced by small columns, each acting to a large extent on its own initiative, when once it had been allotted a specific area to clear. The execution of the new scheme was obviously attended by a certain amount of risk, because there was always the chance of a little column being swamped by a sudden Boer concentration.

Clearance, it has been seen already, included the destruction or removal of practically everything except buildings and dams. The latter were, as a matter of fact, as essential to the British as to the Boers. Millstones and agricultural implements were broken; horses, mules, oxen, and vehicles of every description were collected for purposes of transport. Cattle and sheep, which could not be driven into our lines, or which were not immediately required for food, were slaughtered on the spot and left either to rot or be devoured by the aasvogels.[2] Forage stacks were fired; threshed mealies, kaffir corn, wheat, barley, oats, were scattered with shell or burnt with paraffin. Growing crops were either set on fire or trampled down, according to their maturity. All minor food-stuffs, such as groceries, were destroyed or brought within our lines. At headquarters were chronicled in a bulky volume all reports of hidden ammunition and supplies, and lists of these were periodically furnished to the columns concerned. On a huge map, by aid of various colours, the state of the different districts could be guessed at a glance: red denoted totally cleared; blue, partially cleared; yellow, untouched. Eventually column commanders were required to vouch by a

[1] Cd. 824.

[2] 'We went to Vrede next, and after a day's rest left that place in a shocking state. We killed thousands of sheep and put them in every house. The stench in a week will be horrible. It is to prevent the Boers from returning' (*Daily News*, August 17, 1901; *cf.* report received later from Resident Magistrate, Vrede, dated July 7, 1902, quoted on p. 77.

written certificate that they had denuded of all supplies the areas in which they had been operating. And thus, for month after month, broken, it is true, now and again by some daring capture or 'regrettable incident,' the monotonous, wearisome, humdrum process of attrition continued.

It would be tedious, and it is probably unnecessary, to trace in detail the progress of devastation in the various districts.[1] Applicable in so many other respects, the railway served as a dividing-line to clearing work. The efforts of column commanders were naturally directed much more to the eastern than to the western side, because on the former lay 'the granary of South Africa,' the rich Caledon border. But it was necessary in the first instance to clear a belt of country from east to west, running roughly parallel with the Orange River, and to support it by a blockhouse line in order to deter the Free State commandos from joining those in the Cape Colony. Devastation was for this reason commenced in the south-east, and thence extended gradually northwards. In some few cases, such as Bothaville, Ventersburg, Frankfort, Lindley, Fouriesburg, villages were totally demolished. Vrede, Reitz, Senekal, Dewetsdorp, were amongst those which fared little better.

When the extent and nature of the country is taken into consideration, it must be admitted that the effect of the new method very soon made itself felt. Lord Milner was able, in his despatch dated November 15, 1901, to report considerable progress.[2] 'The advance made in clearing the country,' he wrote, 'is equally marked. Six months ago the enemy were everywhere, outside the principal towns. It is true they held nothing, but they raided wherever they pleased, and, though mostly in small bodies which made little or no attempt at resistance when seriously pressed, they almost invariably returned to their old haunts when the pressure was over. It looked as though the process might go on indefinitely. . . . What seems evident is that the concentration of the Boers, and the substitution of several fairly well defined small

[1] For details, *vide* Cd. 605.

[2] Cd. 908.

campaigns for that sort of running fight all over the country which preceded them is, on the whole, an advantage to us, and tends to bring the end of the struggle within a more measurable distance.'

Actual and consistent pressure, however, could only very gradually be brought to bear upon the Boer forces. They realized the purpose of clearing, but they rejoiced that it had not yet been achieved. August 9 had been appointed as a day of humiliation and prayer, and they gave thanks to God 'for the enemy's failing in his endeavours to rob our country altogether of cattle and grain, and thus to starve us.' By the beginning of 1902, however, the devastation of the Orange River Colony, so far as human food was concerned, was comparatively complete. But the winter alone could destroy the veldt grass, which afforded all the forage required by the commando pony. In the previous November had begun that series of 'carefully arranged converging movements,' otherwise known as 'drives,' which literally compelled the Boer leaders to sign the terms of Vereeniging. For many months, to quote Lord Milner, 'the fight had been mainly over supplies.' Eventually the fighting and pursuit of the enemy came to be considered subsidiary to, and of less importance than, the clearing of territory. In his last despatch[1] before the conclusion of peace, the Commander-in-Chief, describing operations in the north of the Orange River Colony, wrote: 'This march was to be conducted by easy stages, covering a period of three days, with a *primary* object of making a thorough search of the country for hidden depots of ammunition and supplies . . . at the close of each stage a halt would be made for several days, to admit of a careful examination of the country.'

And yet, in spite of all that had been done, the Vereeniging Conference disclosed the existence of a considerable difference of opinion on the subject of devastation among the Boer commandants.[2] The Free State delegates gave what Commandant

[1] Cd. 984, April 8, 1902.
[2] 'Three Years' War' by C. R. de Wet, Appendices A and C.

Mentz described as a 'rose-coloured' report of the state of their various districts. The majority of them were of opinion that they had sufficient food supplies to enable them to continue fighting for another twelve months, and many had sown seed for the ensuing year. Others, however, agreed with General Louis Botha in thinking that the time would shortly come when 'hunger would drive them to surrender.' General de Wet considered 'the circumstances in the Orange Free State no less critical than those in the Transvaal.' Judge Hertzog stated that 'the country as a whole was exhausted.' The first of the six reasons given by the Boer delegates for the discontinuance of the war read as follows: 'Firstly, that the military policy pursued by the British military authorities has led to the general devastation of the territory of both republics by the burning down of farms and towns, by the destruction of all means of existence, and by the exhausting of all resources required for the maintenance of our families, the existence of our armies, and the continuance of the war.'[1]

The most merciless form of warfare proved, after all, the most merciful. When once definitely decided upon, the policy of devastation had been thorough in its execution, but it had never been carried out in a spirit of wantonness.[2] After all other measures had failed it had been adopted as a last

[1] 'Three Years' War,' p. 504: 'The whole question of devastation is indeed one of degree. Two years previously the correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle* had stated, "From end to end the Orange River Colony lies ruined and starving' (*vide Daily Chronicle*, May 28, 1900).

'The state of prosperity of the commandos varied much in the different districts, in inverse proportion to the amount of attention that had been paid them lately by the columns' (General Elliot's Report, Cd. 988).

[2] 'We had to beat the Boers, and it was done thoroughly, yet behind it all was the idea of living, in the years to come, on terms of friendship and equality with the defeated of the day' (*Birmingham Post*, December 29, 1903).

'We are not vindictive; we are not accustomed to bear malice; and our enemies of yesterday, if they surrender to-day, will be welcome to-morrow as friends' (extract from speech of Mr. Chamberlain delivered at the Guildhall, February 13, 1902).

'The decision to continue to resist the British forces by guerilla methods was made by the Boer Generals. The consequent destruction of property was as obvious and foreseen a result of that decision as the answering discharge of a British battery whose fire had been deliberately "drawn" by the Boer gunners' (*Saturday Review*, May 16, 1903).

resource. It was, therefore, unreasonably surmised that on the conclusion of peace the Boers would be ready to 'bury the hatchet,' and to 'let bygones be bygones.' 'The fact,' wrote Lord Kitchener, 'that a spirit of conciliation has marked the concluding phase of the negotiations may well induce a hope that the agreement just signed will lead at an early date to a final reconciliation between the British and Dutch races in South Africa.'[1]

[1] Cd. 986, June 1, 1902. Lord Kitchener's prognostication has been horribly falsified in the event, but it was a perfectly just interpretation of the feeling at the time. The peace of Vereeniging 'was an epoch-making event, and both parties were somewhat carried away by the enthusiasm of the moment. John Bull, bluff and hearty, extended everywhere the right hand of friendship; Brother Boer, however callous and calculating, could not but take that hand, even though the grip might make him wince. The glamour lasted on the Boer side a fortnight' (*The Times*, October 6, 1902).

## CHAPTER II

### CONCENTRATION

'That in case of general devastation the peaceful population may be detained in so-called concentration camps there is no doubt' ('International Law,' L. Oppenheim, vol. ii., p. 122).

'Whenever a belligerent resorts to general devastation, he ought, if possible, to make some provision for the unfortunate peaceful part of the population of the devastated tract of territory. It would be more humane to take them away into captivity instead of letting them perish on the spot. The practice resorted to during the South African War, to house the victims of devastation in concentration camps, must be approved. The purpose of war may even oblige a belligerent to confine a population forcibly in concentration camps' (*Ibid.*, p. 154).

The second reason given by the Boer delegates at the Vereeniging Conference for the conclusion of peace reads as follows: 'Secondly, that the placing of our families in the concentration camps has brought on an unheard-of condition of suffering and sickness, so that in a comparatively short time about 20,000 of our beloved have died there, and that the horrid probability has arisen that by continuing the war our whole nation may die out in this way.'[1] However much it may have favoured the 'survival of the fittest,' the extermination of their race could hardly be contemplated with equanimity by the Boer leaders, since the desire of reproduction is probably the strongest passion which Nature has given to mankind.[2]

The history of the refugee camps—for they were never

[1] 'Three Years' War,' p. 504.

[2] 'La Nature, avant tout, veut la reproduction des êtres; partout, depuis le sommet des montagnes jusqu'au fond de l'Océan, la vie a peur de mourir. Dieu, pour conserver son ouvrage, a donc établi cette loi, que la plus grande jouissance de tous les êtres vivants fût l'acte de la génération' (Alfred de Musset, 'La Confession d'un Enfant du Siècle,' p. 49).

known by any other designation in the Orange River Colony—is contained in innumerable Blue-Books and pamphlets. Their formation aroused a vast amount of criticism, and produced a controversy which possesses a literature of its own. But it is not proposed to touch upon any controversial matter in this connection, or to discuss the question of adequate accommodation, proper feeding, excessive mortality, and other kindred subjects. It is, however, necessary to point out the reasons for the organization of these camps, and to trace very briefly their history.

The clearance and devastation of the colony, of which some account has already been given, embraced the removal of the inhabitants from their homes. Devastation was accompanied by deportation, and deportation was followed by detention.

The Dutch in South Africa are a notoriously sensual race, and the domesticity of the Boer is proverbial. It was thought that pressure might be brought to bear on the commandos through their women folk, and that they would not long be able to bear separation from their families. All is said to be fair in love and war; it was, apparently, expected that the Boer would be prepared to abandon war for the sake of love. There was also a military reason, a political one, and one prompted by the dictates of humanity.[1] To leave women and children on the farms was merely to supply the enemy with intelligence posts and supply depots. General Botha's declaration that the Boers 'never by means of women and children received information regarding operations of war' may be taken as the expression of a pious opinion.[2] Under

[1] 'In the execution of this task of denuding the country of supplies the British military authorities might have chosen either of two methods of treating the Boer population. It was open to them to throw the burden of removing and sustaining this population upon the Boer leaders, or to undertake it themselves. There can be no question as to which of these two courses was the more advantageous from a military point of view. They chose the course which they knew to be the least advantageous to themselves, but which they believed to be the most humane' (*Saturday Review*, May 16, 1903).

[2] General Botha to Lord Roberts, September 20, 1900 (*Manchester Guardian*).

'The Boers subsequently prided themselves, and with justice, upon the assistance rendered by their women during this stage of the war' (*Saturday Review*, May 16, 1903).



Springfontein Refugee Camp.

the terms of some of the proclamations we had promised protection to those burghers who took the oath of neutrality and remained quietly on their farms.[1] With the development of the clearance policy, certain areas were evacuated and our promise was consequently broken. As we were unable to extend our protection to their farms, these burghers were given the option of residing with their families within our lines. At a later stage no option was given, and families were forcibly evicted. In its final phase the deportation of the inhabitants was essential to save them from starvation, and eventually under these circumstances alone were they removed.

Life in the refugee camps may possibly prove to have benefited the present rising generation, and the results of the education received in them are in the womb of the future; but their upkeep was a most costly business,[2] and, from a military point of view, their institution was an utter failure. 'The scheme, which was designed to bring pressure to bear upon the Boers in the field, instead of goading them into surrender, was welcomed by them as a means by which to rid themselves of impedimenta.'[3]

[1] *Vide* Lord Roberts' proclamations, dated March 14 and 15, 1900. Burghers in question were subsequently granted a special gratuity, which is dealt with in Chapter IX.

[2] 'What enormous amounts were spent for the support of the concentration camps! From September 1, 1901, to June 30, 1902, the average population was 42,628, and the average costs were £89,223 3s. 10d. per month. In addition to this, the sum of £9,055 19s. 11d. was spent on camp schools from July 1 to December 31, 1902' ('Concentration Camps,' by the Rev. W. Robertson, Dutch Reformed Church, p. 12). The above figures apply to the Orange River Colony only.

[3] *The Times*, July 12, 1902. In the American Civil War a continual source of anxiety to those fighting was the welfare of the women left alone and defenceless with black servants. It was no small advantage to the commandos to know that, whatever hardships deportation might entail, their families were being well cared for in the British lines, and anyhow, protected from outrage by Kaffirs.

'One is only too thankful nowadays to know that our wives are under English protection' (De Wet to Vereeniging delegates, *vide* 'Three Years' War').

General De Wet's view may be contrasted with that of Lord Courtney: 'When they heard of the horrors which had been heaped upon those closest and dearest to them—deserted in the field, robbed of provisions,

Refugee camps were established on September 22, 1900. On that date a Government Notice announced that 'Camps for burghers who voluntarily surrendered were being formed in Pretoria and at Bloemfontein.'[1] But the number of burghers who elected to live thus was at first not large. The return for May, 1901, shows the existence of only one camp with a population of 335. By the following November, however, fifteen camps had been formed, and their inhabitants numbered 45,083. This was the highest total reached. In December orders were issued to bring in no more families 'unless it was clear that they must starve if they were left on the veldt.'[2] At the conclusion of peace the population of the refugee camps was given as 39,948. This number was slightly increased during June, 1902, by the incoming of certain families who had remained out with the commandos until the end; but by the end of October it had been reduced to 11,800. The last refugee camp was closed in February, 1903.

The hubbub aroused by, and the prominence given to, the formation of the concentration camps for whites completely overshadowed an equally important part of the clearance policy—the deportation of natives. The committee of ladies who visited South Africa in 1901 furnished no report on this essential portion of the concentration system. It may, therefore, claim a somewhat closer examination than that accorded to the sister organization.

The same military reasons applied to a certain extent to blacks as well as to whites. 'The whole intention of the

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clothing, and covering, open to all the attacks of the worst character to which they could be made subject—then their resolution gave way and they accepted peace' (*The Times*, December 13, 1903).

[1] *Vide* Section 4, Government Notice No. iii. of 1900.

[2] Despatch of Lord Kitchener, dated December 6, 1901, Cd. 902.

'When once this responsibility [*i.e.*, the sustenance of the non-combatant population] was laid upon them, or, in other words, when we fought the guerilla leaders on equal terms, the roving commandos were speedily compelled to surrender' (*Saturday Review*, May 16, 1903).

'As the policy of concentration camps was not completely carried out here, the amount of poverty and distress to be dealt with will probably exceed that of other districts' (Extract from Report of Resident Magistrate Heilbron, July 1, 1902).

Commander-in-Chief presumably was to remove from the outlying districts persons who, by their presence there, could have rendered aid voluntarily or compulsorily to the enemy in the field.'[1] But the method adopted in the native camps was much more salutary than that which obtained in the camps for whites, and its results, from an economic point of view, were eminently more satisfactory. A policy which tended to produce a love of ease and idleness by the provision of luxuries previously unknown to the recipients was replaced by an honest attempt to inculcate the principle of self-help, and to teach the Kaffir the 'dignity of labour.'

'In the Orange River Colony the blacks are fewer in proportion to the Europeans than in any other part of South Africa,'[2] but the number of native camps was naturally nearly double that of the white, and the population of the former eventually exceeded that of the latter by some 20,000.[3] The natives of the Orange River Colony are, generally speaking, for people of their class, extremely well-to-do. Under the process of devastation the Kaffir kraal had suffered in an equal degree with the Boer farm, and the losses of the native in kind were frequently as considerable as those of his master.

In the first instance, the native camps had gradually grown up, usually in the neighbourhood of the dorps, by the side of the burgher camps, and both were controlled by the same department. In August, 1901, however, a system, adopted in the Transvaal originally for the purpose of replacing all mine 'boys' at the time in army employ, was applied to the Orange River Colony. The main objects of this system were, firstly, to render the camps practically self-supporting, and, secondly, to make them depots for the supply of labour for the army. The carrying out of these objects entailed a vast amount of reorganization. If the natives were to create their own food-supply, ground suitable for mealies, Kaffir corn, and pumpkins —their staple foods—must be broken up and seed sown. The

[1] Cd. 903.

[2] Bryce, 'Impressions of South Africa.'

[3] Number of Camps, 30 ; population, 60,000. These were the highest totals reached.

blockhouse system was, at this time, confined practically to the main railway-line. The only areas, therefore, thoroughly protected and available for cultivation were those in the vicinity of the railway.

A new department to deal with this question—the Native Refugee Department—was created, with headquarters at Bloemfontein. The outlying native camps, with the exception of those at Thaba N'Chu and near Harrismith, were brought into the railway. The sites for the new camps were all selected north of Bloemfontein, because that portion of the colony enjoys earlier and more certain rains than do the southern districts. In order to obtain suitable ground within the limited area available, many of the older camps were split up and smaller camps formed. At the time of this reorganization there were some 23,000 natives, men, women, and children, in the outlying camps, and practically all had to be removed with their belongings and live-stock. A native's goods and chattels are, fortunately, not extensive; he can as a rule, without great inconvenience, 'take up his bed and walk.' The concentration of these camps, eight in number, on to the main railway-line was carried out in the short space of a month, in spite of the shortage of trucks due to military movements.

Under the old régime the natives had been rationed by contract, and the cost for adults worked out at 4½d. a head per diem. A certain portion of this expenditure was recovered by deducting £1 per mensem from the pay of natives employed by the army whose families were in the camps. But the 'boys' never appreciated such deductions, and very seldom understood them. The question of rations was a difficult one, because the comparatively wealthy native was always willing to pose as a pauper, if by that means he could obtain a free issue. It will be observed that, contrary to the system adopted in the concentration camps, the natives were expected to pay for provisions if they had the wherewithal to do so.

The following extract from a circular issued to the camp superintendents was obviously framed with the object of inducing the inmates of the camps to work: 'All natives shall

be rationed after the 1st of October under the following conditions:

'(*a*) Natives who are working for the Government, or cultivate land for their own benefit, shall be at liberty to purchase mealie meal for their own use at ½d. per lb., but not to obtain more than half a bag at a time.

'(*b*) Natives who will not work for the Government, or cultivate land for their own benefit, shall be at liberty to purchase mealie meal for their own use at 1d. per lb., but not to obtain more than half a bag at a time.

'(*c*) Natives who are destitute, and have no means of purchasing, shall receive free rations of mealie meal at the rate of 1½ lbs. per diem for those over twelve years of age, and 1 lb. for those under twelve years, those under twelve months not included.

'All natives can be supplied with salt free (1 ounce per head per day).

'No stoppage will be made by the department from the natives' pay for the month of September and onwards. The Government, in undertaking to sell mealie meal to the natives who work at a price less than half cost, is desirous to encourage the native to work or help himself by cultivating and growing sufficient food for his own use. Cases of destitution will have to be helped, but at the same time the Government is anxious to avoid a heavy expenditure in relief, which may tend to create a spirit of laziness and a pauperizing of the natives.'

But 'it was found almost impossible to withdraw the free issue originally given, and in this respect the work of reorganization proceeded very slowly.' The December return shows that, out of a population of some 46,000, about 16,000 were still on the free list.

The compound system, familiar in connection with the mining industry, was adopted in the native camps. Everything which the natives were likely to require was supplied on the spot. All sales were conducted under the eye of the camp superintendent, and articles were retailed at as near cost price as possible. A small store was opened in each

camp for the sale of 'luxuries,' such as golden syrup, candles, tobacco, corned beef, clothing, etc. The provision of a varied diet improved the health and spirit of the natives, and acted indirectly as an incentive to labour.

The inmates of the camps naturally included the families and relatives, not only of 'boys' employed by the army, but also of those who had taken service with the commandos. In December, 1901, some 3,000 natives had been supplied to the British forces, while about 400 were in private service. In addition to these, 1,000 approximately were employed as night watchmen, to prevent small parties of Boers from looting the camps and crossing the railway.

Next to the supply of labour for the army the question of cultivation was considered. It has already been pointed out that the sites of the camps had been selected with this object, and the inducements held out have already been dwelt upon. But certain difficulties were encountered in persuading the women to hoe and pick, and in making them realize that all crops would be for their own benefit. During the war cattle for ploughing were scarce; a large number of those otherwise available were suffering from disease. Inoculation still further hampered the work. Moreover, military considerations had to be complied with. The Commander-in-Chief forbade the sowing of any land within one mile of a block-house, because of the cover the crop might afford to the enemy desiring to attack or cross the line; but he approved of deserted farms along the railway being cultivated by the natives for their own benefit. In spite of difficulties, about 31,000 acres in all were broken up. Vegetable and pumpkin seeds were issued; mealies, Kaffir corn, seed oats, and potatoes were sown. The authorities reserved the right to purchase any surplus grain grown, and the sale of such surplus assisted very materially in making the department self-supporting.[1]

When the natives first came into the camps they were in an impoverished condition, and the death-rate was very high. This excessive mortality was attributed to loss of stock and

[1] The actual cost per head a day was eventually reduced to a fraction less than one penny three farthings.

consequent want of milk; to declimitization, which natives are little able to stand; to the fact that huts were too close together, and not up to the ordinary kraal standard. As the organization was improved, however, and medical inspections became more frequent, the death-rate was reduced almost to normal. The birth-rate was low, probably on account of so large a proportion of the male population being absent with columns and commandos. Medical attendance was given free of charge, and medical comforts were supplied to mothers and children on a doctor's certificate.

The system which has been briefly sketched had many advantages to recommend it. Actual and reliable figures are not available, but the whole cost of the Orange River Colony Native Refugee Department is infinitesimal when compared with the sum expended on the upkeep of the concentration camps. The natives were not pauperized and led to believe that the Government would go on feeding them indefinitely. In a spirit differing vastly from that which prevailed in the concentration camps they realized the situation, and accepted all that was done for them as partial compensation for the loss of their stock and crops, and for the hardships inseparable from a state of war. Had not the war been followed by two dry seasons, the natives had been put in a fair way to start life afresh on the cessation of hostilities.

Lord Milner estimated that the 'Vereeniging terms entitled something over 33,000' prisoners of war 'to be restored to liberty.'[1] Exactitude cannot be guaranteed, but it is necessary to discover approximately what proportion of these belonged to the Orange River Colony.[2] Of the 24,000 in prisoners' camps in St. Helena, India, Bermuda, and Ceylon, 11,685 were Free Staters. Out of 1,000 interned at Simons Town, 602 returned to the Orange River Colony. Out of 1,200 'prisoners elsewhere in South Africa,' the Orange River

[1] Cd. 1551.

[2] 'At the declaration of peace there were 44,969 persons in the burgher camps of the Transvaal, besides 21,038 in the Natal burgher camps, and 15,000 prisoners of war belonging to the Transvaal and a large number of surrendered burghers, who had never been in concentration camps' (Report on Transvaal Repatriation, Cd. 1551, p. 31).

Colony claimed 547. 'Of the rest, the great majority had been allowed to live in concentration camps, while the balance were on parole in different parts of South Africa and in Europe.' Those in the Orange River Colony concentration camps have already been considered; perhaps 10,000 may be taken as the number of Free Staters and their families in camp in Natal and the Cape Colony. Returns show that outside the burgher camps 412 Free Staters were on parole in Cape Colony, 275 in Natal, and 30 in Portugal. The number of refugees in Basutoland and in the various towns in the Orange River Colony was considerable. These people had preferred to live at their own expense rather than avail themselves of the accommodation provided in the refugee camps, probably on account of the comparatively greater liberty which they thus enjoyed. They belonged, as a rule, to a rather more prosperous class than the ordinary refugee; but it is to be feared that in many cases, anticipating the end of the war long before it came, they spent most of their available funds in eking out an existence very little superior to that provided at Government expense. The number of Free Staters who surrendered on the Vereeniging terms was 6,455;[1] and it has been calculated that the women and children who remained with the Free State commandos until the end or who were practically starving on farms numbered 5,000.

The Orange River Colony Repatriation Department, therefore, at the conclusion of hostilities was called upon to deal with a scattered population of, roughly, 80,000 souls. Before, however, describing the measures adopted to restore these people to their homes, it may be useful to examine Articles 2 and 10 of the Vereeniging terms, under which the department was constituted, to give some account of its organization, and to describe briefly some of the kindred departments and the preliminary difficulties. These subjects will be dealt with in the next three chapters.

[1] Cd. 988. The total numbers of surrenders of armed burghers in the Transvaal were 11,166, in the Orange River Colony 6,455, and in the Cape Colony 3,635; grand total, 21,256.

## CHAPTER III

### ARTICLE X. OF THE TERMS OF VEREENIGING

'It hath been said that an unjust peace is to be preferred before a just war.'—BUTLER.

'Miseram pacem vel bello bene mutari.'—TACITUS.

'It is more than a crime: it is a political blunder.'—FOUCHÉ.

THE fact that wholesale devastation may be legitimate is generally acknowledged, and history consequently contains numerous examples of devastating wars. In some of these devastation was merely incidental to certain military operations; in others, it was adopted as an independent means of attack.[1] In former times it was the common practice to devastate the enemy's country, not with any direct military object, but to wantonly inflict as much pain and distress on his subjects as possible, and devastation was constantly used independently of any immediate military advantage accruing from it. But during the seventeenth century the principle, that the suffering inflicted on the enemy must not be wanton or disproportionate to the advantages gained thereby, gathered strength, and opinion seems to have struggled, not altogether in vain, to prevent devastation from being abused. Accordingly, although the devastation of Belgium in 1683 and of Piedmont ten years later do not appear to have aroused any general criticism, yet Louis XIV. considered it necessary to justify his total ravaging of the Palatinate in 1689 on the ground that it was essential to set up a barrier to cover his own

[1] Hall's 'International Law' and Risley's 'Law of War.'

frontier. 'In the eighteenth century the alliance of devastation with strategical objects became more close. It was either employed to deny the use of a tract of country to the enemy by rendering subsistence difficult, as when the Duke of Marlborough wasted the neighbourhood of Munich in 1704, and the Prussians devastated part of Bohemia in 1757; or it was an essential part of a military operation, as when the Duc de Vendôme cut the dykes and laid the country under water from the neighbourhood of Ostend to Ghent, while endeavouring to sever the communications with the former place of the English engaged in the siege of Lille.'[1] In these cases of destruction, however, as in the vast majority of others, recuperation after war was gradual and not organized; it was left to Nature and individual effort, and seldom received any direct aid from Government.

In Italian history, curiously enough, may be found an example of a repatriation and land settlement scheme as early as the middle of the sixteenth century.[2] During the siege of Siena by the Duke of Florence, the Sienese Marenna was laid absolutely bare in the most systematic manner. After the capitulation, Cosimo I. replaced the population as far as possible. This did not nearly suffice, however, and his agents, consequently, collected colonials from all parts of Italy. He was very liberal in the remission of taxes, and allowed all seed grain, implements, building material, etc., to be imported free of duty. This was a great concession for those days, and the whole scheme was far in advance of the age in which it was carried out. The 'enlightened despotism' of the eighteenth century supplies an instance of repatriation on a minor scale. At the close of the Seven Years' War, Frederick the Great allowed the animals and grain collected for the anticipated campaign of 1763 to be distributed among the inhabitants of Silesia for the purpose of ploughing and sowing.[3]

In the two cases quoted such assistance as was given may

[1] All these cases and several others will be found in Hall, § 186.
[2] 'Cambridge Modern History,' vol. iii., pp. 386-395.
[3] Consult Tuttle's 'History of Prussia.'

be regarded as an afterthought on the part of the conqueror, and was not stipulated in the conditions of peace. History may certainly be searched in vain for any instance of a repatriation scheme at all on all-fours with that recently carried out in South Africa. Article X. of the terms of Vereeniging is probably the first example of its kind. 'History does not afford a parallel to such generosity to a vanquished foe.'[1] The task of repatriation was 'one of the most curious and quixotic burdens ever borne by a nation.'[2] 'The Repatriation Department had a task before them unlike anything else since the Jews returned from Babylon.'[3] 'The task thus thrown upon the administrative capacity of the Empire, and frankly accepted by the victors, was one of a kind which had never before been attempted, and for which, therefore, no guidance could be sought or obtained from experience.'[4] The repatriation scheme was, then, more or less a leap in the dark. When it was started there was not much to go upon: there were no previous examples; the subject could not be read up from text-books, for such did not exist.

And yet the repatriation scheme was the logical outcome of events which immediately preceded its organization. It was, after all, part and parcel of the clearance policy, 'a pendant to the work undertaken in the concentration camps. In the same way as Great Britain had rescued, clothed, fed, and educated the wives and children of the men against whom she was fighting; so at the conclusion of hostilities did she

[1] *Birmingham Post*, December 29, 1903.
[2] 'The African Colony: Studies in the Reconstruction,' John Buchan.
[3] *Daily Chronicle*, October 16, 1903.
[4] *The Times*, September 28, 1903. 'Perhaps the nearest approach to such guidance might have been furnished by the records of the various associations which were formed in order to mitigate the distress left behind in France by the war with Germany; but the capable almoners to whose hands the funds collected for this purpose were committed were merely the agents of private charity, and had no other responsibility than that of doing the best they could with the money and the opportunities at their disposal. The Repatriation Departments of South Africa occupied the totally different position of being the representatives of a Government which could not afford to fall short of the complete fulfilment of its undertakings, however arduous they might be' (*ibid.*).

undertake to reunite the scattered families, and re-establish them in their homes.'[1]

It must not be supposed that Article X. was in any sense of the word a 'sop' to the Boer leaders, given in order to secure peace. Its wording may have come as a surprise to the general public at home, who were not fully conversant with local circumstances, and who probably did not realize the absolutely destitute condition of the country at the close of hostilities. But, as a matter of fact, it was realized months before the conclusion of peace that some extraordinary organization would be necessary to restore to their homes the absentee population, and the repatriation scheme had been under the consideration of the civil authorities for some considerable time. That this was the case is shown by the following extract from a despatch written by Lord Milner at Bloemfontein in December, 1901:

'As regards the return of these people to their farms, the time when it can even be commenced is necessarily uncertain; but it is desirable to utilize the interval before that return can commence in making preliminary arrangements which will enable us to carry it out, when the time comes, in an orderly manner, and in the way most calculated to facilitate the resumption by the people of their normal avocations. I need not point out that this will be a work of great difficulty. The preliminary business falls under two heads: (1) We require a census of the people, both in the prisoners' camps and in the concentration camps, not only to foresee the numbers which it will be necessary to bring back to each district, but also as far as possible to group them, so that the families may be brought back together. In the concentration camps complete records are being kept. As regards the prisoners' camps, you are aware that it was my intention to appoint commissions to go round these camps and make a census; but the difficulty of obtaining a sufficient number of competent people to undertake this work in the considerable number of separate camps at a great distance from South Africa proved insuperable, and

[1] *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, January 1, 1904.

we are therefore now relying on what can be done locally by the officers in charge of the several camps to furnish us with the necessary particulars. (2) The second preparatory inquiry which has to be undertaken with regard to those returning is even more difficult than the census. We shall have to endeavour to find out what the people will require in the way of stock, seed, and agricultural implements, in order to commence gaining their livelihood when they first return, and to decide by what means and from what sources these necessaries are to be provided. As you are aware, the country has in most parts been in the course of the war completely denuded of everything that is necessary for the conduct of farming operations. A great deal will have to be found for the people, if they are not to starve when they return to their homes. After giving the matter a great deal of consideration, I have come to the conclusion that it is necessary to appoint in each colony a commission of persons well acquainted with the country and its agricultural conditions, to advise the Government as to the necessary minimum of stock, seed, waggons, etc., which will have to be provided, and also to suggest the sources from which these can be most expeditiously and most economically obtained. A great deal of material, no doubt, exists in the country, mainly in the hands of the military; a good deal more can be got from the coast colonies; but my present belief is that this will not suffice, and that we must look ahead and place orders at home and in Australia for a good deal that will be immediately necessary when the return of the farming population commences.'[1]

The foregoing despatch was written several months before Article X. was drafted; the Repatriation Department was in existence before that article was made public in its final form.

By the end of 1901 an Advisory Committee on the subject of returning refugees had been created at Pretoria. In the

[1] South Africa, 1148. Lord Milner to Secretary of State for the Colonies, dated Bloemfontein, December 30, 1901.

Orange River Colony the Land Settlement Department had been dealing for some months with the introduction of new settlers. In a despatch, dated February 11, 1902, Lord Milner discussed at some length the organization of Land Settlement and Repatriation Departments.[1] He contemplated originally the creation of a single Land Board, which should carry out both the restoration of the exiled farming population and the introduction of new settlers. In a later despatch, however, realizing the magnitude of the task which repatriation entailed, he decided that the two departments should be kept distinct, acting separately and independently of each other.

The Repatriation Department, constituted in April, 1902, was at the commencement insignificant. It consisted originally of a Secretary, an Assistant Secretary, one clerk, and a typist. Its work at this period was chiefly statistical, and for the first six weeks of its existence it was occupied in compiling a census, based on information supplied by officers in charge of the concentration and prisoners' camps, of the number of people to be returned to their homes. Unfortunately, during this stage no attention was given to the subject of what such people were likely to require, and orders for stock and stores were not placed, as Lord Milner had contemplated in the despatch quoted above, 'at home and in Australia for a good deal that would be immediately necessary when the return of the farming population commenced.'

With the declaration of peace, however, on June 1, 1902, the scene was changed. What had hitherto been an insignificant record office, comparatively unknown, suddenly developed into a huge department, employing nearly a thousand officials, which temporarily overshadowed all other branches of the Administration. The return, which Lord Milner desired should be carried out 'in an orderly manner,' turned out to be in many cases a rush, where order was unknown. The statistics collected proved utterly useless when the time for action came,

[1] O.R.C., No. 24, dated Johannesburg, February 11, 1902.

and were consigned to pigeon-holes, where they may possibly still be found.[1]

The following is the text of the two articles in the terms of Vereeniging which have to be examined:

'2. Secondly, Burghers in the field beyond the frontiers of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony, and all Prisoners of War who are out of South Africa, who are Burghers, shall, on their declaration that they accept the status of subjects of His Majesty King Edward VII., be brought back to their homes as soon as transport and means of existence can be assured.'

'10. Tenthly, as soon as circumstances permit, there shall be appointed in each District of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony a Commission, on which the local inhabitants will be represented, under the Chairmanship of the Magistrate or other Official, for the purpose of assisting the restoration of the people to their homes, and supplying those who, owing to war losses, are unable to provide themselves with food, shelter, and the necessary amount of seed, stock, implements, etc., indispensable to the resumption of their normal occupations. His Majesty's Government will place at the disposal of these Commissions a sum of £3,000,000 for the above purposes, and will allow all notes, issued under law No. 1, of 1900, of the South African Republic, and all receipts given by officers in the field of the late Republics, or under their orders, to be presented to a Judicial Commission, which will be appointed by the Government; and if such notes and receipts are found by this Commission to have been duly issued in return for valuable consideration, they will be received by the first-named Commissions as evidence of war losses suffered by the persons to whom they were originally given. In addition to the above-named free grant of £3,000,000, His Majesty's Government will be prepared to make advances as loans for the same purpose, free of interest for two years, and afterwards repay-

[1] 'When the Department commenced, the Government wished a schedule form, with inside leaflet, for each person to be filled in with certain details. Forms were consequently ordered, but as the pressure of work shortly afterwards became severe, the schedule in question was dropped and the forms not used.'

able over a period of years with 3 per cent. interest. No foreigner or rebel will be entitled to the benefit of this clause.'

These two articles are concerned with three main subjects —Repatriation, Claims Compensation, Loans. The second of these is dealt with in a subsequent chapter, and may therefore for the present be dismissed.[1] It is necessary to discover exactly the promises made and the obligations undertaken by Great Britain in connection with the other two; to describe the interpretation put upon Article X. in this connection and the measures adopted to carry out its provisions.

It will be observed at the outset that, had the British Government chosen to be captious, both articles contain a qualifying clause. The first is, 'as soon as transport and means of existence can be assured'; the second, 'as soon as circumstances permit.' There was no stipulation as to who was to decide either when the transport was available or when circumstances permitted. Presumably, this decision lay with the victor. So far as the actual wording is concerned, therefore, exile and detention might have been continued indefinitely. It is a principle of International Law, however, that with the restoration of peace the right to detain prisoners of war as such ceases, although for purposes of convenience they may be kept under supervision until proper arrangements have been made for their return home.

The one all-important condition laid down, under which the Boers were to be allowed to return to their homes, was that they should accept the status of British subjects. After taking the oath of allegiance, signing a prescribed form of declaration, or signifying his assent to the treaty subscribed to by his leaders, every ex-burgher, with his family, was entitled to free transport by ship, rail and waggon, to his domicile.[2] Oversea prisoners of war were granted free

[1] Chapter IX.

[2] The declaration of allegiance was worded as follows: 'I, the undersigned, declare herewith that I signify my consent to the resolution of the representatives of the people, taken on May 31, 1902, at Vereeniging, Transvaal, whereby our former Government was empowered to accept the proposals of His Majesty's Government, and I acknowledge herewith His Majesty Edward VII. as my Sovereign.'

passages to South Africa and free transport to their homes; every family was repatriated free of cost; no charge was made for administrative expenses.[1]

On the financial side the wording of Article X. is not quite clear, and when it came to be applied, it underwent considerable modifications. There was, in the first place, a free grant of £3,000,000 to the Boers to assist in resettlement. Secondly, a liberal system of loans was to be instituted, but the amount to be advanced in this manner was not specified. It was not stated out of whose pocket the free grant was to come, and this omission led later to one of the most interesting, humorous, and instructive debates on Parliamentary procedure to be found in the annals of the House of Commons.[2]

It would appear reasonable to suppose that if the three millions were styled a 'free grant,' South Africa would not be called upon to pay it. But it was understood by His Majesty's Government, when the conditions of peace were arranged, that this grant was to be given, not out of the Imperial Exchequer, 'but that it should be part of any Transvaal Loan which should be floated on behalf of South Africa.'[3] This was not, however, the interpretation put upon the article by the Boer Generals, and was certainly not that accepted by the general public. It might have satisfied the letter, but it would not have complied with the spirit, of the Terms of Surrender. 'It was urged,' said Mr. Ritchie, 'and I think with considerable force, that a free gift by His Majesty's

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The following was the form of the declaration made by Boer prisoners interned in oversea camps: 'I adhere to the terms of the agreement signed at Pretoria on May 31, 1902, between my late Government and the representatives of His Majesty's Government. I acknowledge myself to be a subject of King Edward VII., and I promise to own true allegiance to him, his heirs and successors, according to law.'

[1] 'There can be no better illustration of the spirit in which we have treated our late enemies than the way in which we have carried out th repatriation of the Boers. According to the terms of peace, we were to devote £3,000,000 to this purpose. No one could have found fault if we had deducted from this sum the cost of the administration of the fund. The £3,000,000, however, were left intact' (*The Times*, October 28, 1903).

[2] *Vide The Times*, November 5, 1902.

[3] Mr. Ritchie in the House of Commons, November 4, 1902.

Government meant that the money would be found, not out of Transvaal revenue, but out of the revenue of the United Kingdom.' It was felt that it would be unwise to give the Boers any cause for dissatisfaction, or 'any solid ground for the contention that we had got them to agree to terms of surrender under false pretences.' It was therefore eventually arranged that the British taxpayer should bear the expense of repatriating his late enemy. At the same time the amount to be advanced in loans was limited to £3,000,000. It was decided that this sum, to be advanced immediately from the funds of the Imperial Treasury, was to be made repayable out of the Transvaal Loan when it should be floated.

The terms of Article X. are practically confined to ex-burghers of the two Boer States. It was not unnatural that rebels and foreigners should be excluded from benefiting by its provisions; but it is remarkable that, although it applied to the population generally, no mention is made of British subjects resident in the late Republics previous to the war. In a fit of generosity to our recent enemies the British Government was suddenly reminded of its friends. 'I am sure,' said Mr. Ritche, in the debate above referred to, 'the House would certainly not be satisfied with any arrangement by which the Boers were to receive a considerable sum for repatriation and other matters under the terms of surrender, and the loyalists would not receive a corresponding advantage. After consideration, we have come to the conclusion to appropriate to the loyalists two millions in a similar manner, and that this will meet the justice of the case. It therefore follows that if a free gift should come out of the revenue for the Boers, then the £2,000,000 for the loyalists should also come from the revenues of the United Kingdom.' These £2,000,000 were appropriated to claims for compensation, and British subjects were not dealt with under the scheme of repatriation in the Orange River Colony.

Every burgher was, presumably, entitled to free transport to his home. Further assistance after arrival there would depend upon his ability or inability to help himself. The

class to be assisted was 'those unable to provide for themselves'; the amount of assistance to be rendered was that 'indispensable to the resumption of their normal occupations.' This being so, each case had to be dealt with on its own merits, and the greatest care had to be exercised to avoid anything and everything which might have fostered pauperization of those receiving aid. Article X. was not intended to be a replica of eighteenth-century English Poor Law served up as a 'Speenhamland Act of Parliament.'

It is probably unnecessary to point out that the repatriation scheme was not framed to deal with pauperism, for destitution, as understood at home, is unknown in South Africa in ordinary times. It was only the exceptional circumstance of two years' drought following on three years' war which necessitated the institution of a Government Relief Department. But the absence of absolute destitution only serves to emphasize in South Africa the pitiable condition of the 'poor white.' So far as the Grant Fund is concerned, it is evident that those who were to benefit by it belonged chiefly to what is known as the bijwoner class—'a landless class, who, previous to the war, led a tolerated existence, under which they enjoyed the use of a portion of the land to grow food for their maintenance and run their little stock, in exchange for a somewhat indefinite amount of service rendered to the landowner, generally without any formal lease or security of tenure whatsoever.'[1]

'The bijwoner problem,' wrote Lord Milner, 'is not in any sense the result of the war. The rapid growth of a large landless class (*arme boeren*, or "poor whites") had been a growing source of the greatest trouble and anxiety to the Governments of the late Republics for a good many years. It was the natural consequence of the rapid increase of the burgher population, unaccompanied by any appreciable increase in the productivity of the soil. Except in a very few districts the occupations of the rural population had remained purely pastoral. But if he is to live by pasturage

[1] Cd. 1551.

only, a man requires in South Africa—except in specially favoured districts—a large extent of ground. The vast farms of the small number of original settlers could bear one subdivision, in some cases perhaps a second, but the process of continual subdivision among large families was bound to result in the individual holding becoming too small to support a family in comfort. Under these circumstances one of two things happened: either the landowner made special arrangements for his land passing to only one member of his family, or, where the land was already too much subdivided, the less provident owners were gradually squeezed out, and the larger farm, which was an economic necessity, was reconstituted by the amalgamation of a number of smaller ones. In either case a number of men were left without land, and as the Boers as a body had not many opportunities of living otherwise than by the land, and were reluctant to avail themselves of such opportunities even where they existed, there was nothing for it but that the landless man should "squat" in a more or less dependent condition on the land of his more fortunate fellow, who was generally also his relative.'[1]

Lord Milner here has traced briefly the origin and upgrowth of the class of poor whites. The bijwoner class is as a whole indolent and unenterprising, but the number of exceptions is of course considerable. Where they were energetic and industrious, landowners were glad to have their assistance in rebuilding their farms. Others possessed a knowledge, usually more or less superficial, of some handicraft. Both these classes could be dealt with under the ordinary repatriation scheme. The first could be returned to their former homes; the second simply needed aid in the way of prepaid rental for some months, and tools and food to start with. But it was very much more difficult to cope with

[1] Cd. 1551. 'The only alternative for the landless man, crowded out of any share in the family heritage, was to become a dependent on the property of his more fortunate relatives, giving assistance on the farm, and receiving in return his daily bread and butter, and such moral and social delicacies as usually fall to the lot of poor relations' ('The New Era in South Africa,' p. 31).



A Typical Bijwoner.



A Typical Bijwoner Family.

the large class of lazy and indifferent, and at the close of hostilities the whole question was brought to a head by the fact that a considerable number of landowners refused to take back on to their farms their former quota of bijwoners. The situation in such cases was critical in the extreme. 'Without assets of any sort, with claims for compensation that even in the aggregate were insignificant, in many cases lacking the stamina to make a fresh start in life, with the reputation of wanting in both the wish and the ability to work, they formed a class which it was extremely difficult for Government to help, and there was every prospect that they would remain as a permanent pauperized element in the population.'[1] In the Orange River Colony a temporary solution was found in the establishment of relief works; in the Transvaal a more permanent scheme was adopted by the institution of burgher land settlements.

From the wording of Article X. it was clear that two separate and distinct tasks were contemplated:[2] Firstly, the assisting the restoration of the people to their homes; and, secondly, supplying those who, owing to war losses, were unable to provide themselves with food, shelter, and the necessary amount of seed, stock, implements, etc., indispensable to the resumption of their normal occupations. If before the relief, which had to be provided to carry out the second task, could be given, investigations as to whether such relief was required owing to war losses were necessary, the evident intention of Article X. could not be accomplished. To have encumbered the local commissions with the duty of deciding then and there who was or was not entitled to a free grant would have materially delayed the more important work of getting the people back on to their farms. Nor were there at this period any sufficient data to show even the approximate amount that any individual might expect in respect of compensation for war losses. The relief to be effective had to be

[1] Sir Hamilton Goold Adams' Report, Cd. 1551, p. 9.
[2] *Vide* in this connection Cd. 1551, Cd. 3028, and *The Times*, September 28, 1903.

prompt. If nothing was to be done until the free grant of £3,000,000 had been allotted to the Boers and distributed according to their proved war losses, it would mean a delay of many months, the tedious examination of war claims, the waste of the current ploughing season, and the loss of a harvest. In the meantime they would all have to be kept and fed in the concentration camps. So that the two tasks might be carried out simultaneously, the Government determined to allow the local commissions to make all necessary and proper advances in cash and kind to all persons requiring the assistance and relief contemplated in Article X., and directed that the value of such advances should be debited against the persons to whom they were made. The burghers were allowed to anticipate their share of the £3,000,000 grant, and to purchase their requirements on credit.

It was decided that all advances and issues should in the first instance be treated as loans. These loans, like the population they were intended to assist, fell roughly into two classes—secured and unsecured. The former were issued on mortgages or promissory notes, the latter against an acknowledgment of indebtedness. It will be readily understood that the bijwoners, whose precarious situation has already been described, fell mainly under the second class. The first class applied generally to landowners

The free gift of £3,000,000 was obviously intended for those who could not help themselves. It followed, therefore, that all those who could provide for themselves had no claim to aid from the Grant Fund. Examples of this latter class were men who had farms unmortgaged or only lightly mortgaged, and had good credit; men, again, who had filed receipts with the Military Boards, which were likely to be paid in full. Such men might, however, be assisted from the Loan Fund against securities or bonds to the satisfaction of the Government. Landowners in possession of an unmortgaged farm of 2,000 acres and upwards were generally regarded as not coming within the scope of the Loan Fund. It was considered that these men could obtain money from

any bank at the ordinary rate of 6 per cent. per annum, and that the amount of interest payable thereon would not incapacitate them from recovering their former position. On the other hand, in cases where landowners possessed a farm of 2,000 acres or less, or one larger, but which was mortgaged, and when it was considered that they, although possibly able to borrow money from the banks, would still be unable to pay the interest thereon without being unduly hampered, the Repatriation Department authorized loans on first or second mortgage. In cases where it was deemed advisable, the Department occasionally consented to take over or retire existing mortgages at the original rate of interest, or not more than 6 per cent., in addition to any advance granted under Article X. This was only done in cases where it was feared that bonds might be foreclosed, and that the benefit resulting from any advance made by the Department would, consequently, be lost, or where the margin of safety was considered insufficient to advance money on a second or third mortgage, unless the first mortgage was held by Government.

The amount of the Loan Fund, originally not specified, was later, as already pointed out, limited to £3,000,000. The advantages it afforded will be appreciated when it is stated that the ordinary rate of interest obtaining in South Africa on mortgage bonds is 6 or 7 per cent. Added to this was the fact that such loans were for two years to be free of interest. The ordinary loan did not exceed £500, and averaged usually from £300 to £400. 'A period of years' was interpreted to mean generally five years, and very few loans were advanced for a longer time. In all but exceptional cases the ordinary loan consisted of one-third cash and two-thirds kind, the most useful form at the time and the most acceptable to the Boer.[1]

[1] In several districts—as, for instance, Frankfort—the local records had during the war been lost or destroyed. All mortgages were registered at Bloemfontein, but reference to, and search at, headquarters involved delay.

The Resident Magistrate at Heilbron urged the necessity of simplifying

The second form of security was that of promissory notes. These notes up to £150 had to be backed by one landed proprietor, and by two if that amount was exceeded. The amounts were payable in two years, no interest being charged. The form of promissory note sanctioned by the Government was specially prepared by the Central Board to meet the circumstances of repatriation. Its language was fuller than that of the ordinary promissory note, and it stated in complete detail, for the information and guidance of the country people and local commissioners, what in ordinary business circles would be presumed or implied.[1] It, moreover, specified a

the system by which applicants for loans who had lost their title-deeds might obtain the benefits of the Loan Fund. He pointed out that local rates of interest were high, and that there was danger of landowners parting with the option of their farms for insufficient consideration if they were obliged to raise money locally (Heilbron Report, July 19, 1902).

The Bethulie District Repatriation Commission asked to be allowed to employ attorneys to draw up mortgage bonds, and suggested that the expense incurred in this connection should be met out of repatriation funds. The Central Board, however, decided that the borrowers must pay their own costs.

'The Central Board is prepared to leave to the discretion of your Commission the question of advancing loans up to £300 in cash in cases which you consider would thereby benefit' (Letter to Resident Magistrate, Winburg, dated August 26, 1902).

[1] The following is a specimen of the promissory note in question:

REPATRIATION FUNDS.

(*Place of issue*) Bloemfontein.
(*Date of signing*) August 1, 1902.

£160 10s. 6d.

I, Johannes Hendrik Dinges, residing at Dingesfontein, hereby acknowledge to be lawfully indebted to the Colonial Treasurer of the Orange River Colony, for the Repatriation Department, his order, successor, or assigns, in the sum of one hundred and sixty pounds ten shillings and sixpence sterling for the value received in cash and kind, which said sum I hereby promise to pay to the said Colonial Treasurer or his order on demand, without interest, and otherwise if prolonged beyond the period of twenty-four months, on the first day of August, 1904, together with the interest thereon at 3 per cent. per annum, reckoned from the first day of August, 1904, at the Office of the Colonial Treasurer at Bloemfontein.

(*Signature of debtor*) J. H. DINGES.

As Sureties and Co-principal Debtors—
(*Signature*) JACOBUS SCHUTTE,
(*Address*) Leeuw Spruit.
(*Signature*) JOHN SMITH.
(*Address*) Erf. No. 02485, Bloemfontein.

domicile of payment, and also the unusually low rate of interest to be charged if payment should be deferred. This system of promissory notes was intended to meet, and did meet, the requirements of the better class bijwoners, men who had little actual security to offer, but who were deserving and trustworthy, and commanded the confidence of land-owners.

Draught and breeding animals, transport vehicles, agricultural implements, building material, etc., were issued on mortgages or promissory notes, both of which were recoverable, and most of which were eventually redeemed. Food-stuffs and seed corn, on the other hand, were issued against acknowledgments of indebtedness. These acknowledgments of indebtedness were devised to meet the cases of those who had absolutely no security to offer. They were in no sense of the word legal instruments; they were neither stamped nor registered, and had little in common with the ordinary promissory note. 'They may best be compared with an ordinary tradesman's account, which may or may not become a bad debt.' In the majority of cases no attempt was made to recover the values advanced against these documents. They were written off as free grants. In a considerable number of cases, however, it was possible for the Department to recover its advances out of the money that was ultimately paid to some of the debtors by the Central Judicial Commission.[1]

The advisability of keeping in all cases a personal account against every individual was at first questioned. It was proposed originally to debit everyone assisted who had fixed property or other assets; but to the poorer bijwoners or other persons without property, who had no security to offer, and from whom it was useless to expect repayment of any part of the assistance rendered, it was suggested that such assistance should be given at once in the form of a free grant, on the ground that it would serve no good purpose to open personal accounts for such grants, and that the work of accounting

[1] *Vide* Appendix E, p. 274.

would be inordinately increased thereby. It was decided, however, that an account must be kept against all belonging to the latter class. 'Though they may at the present time,' wrote Lord Milner, 'have no means of paying such advances, yet they may in the future find themselves enabled to do so—at any rate, in part; for instance, they may have claims for cattle commandeered by the British forces. It, therefore, seems to me important that an account should be kept against every individual, no matter what his condition, and that he should be made to understand that he will be required to pay as much of the advance as possible.'[1] Although it involved an infinite amount of troublesome detail work, the wisdom of Lord Milner's decision will hardly be questioned. The greatest care was required to avoid anything and everything which might tend to foster the pauperization of those receiving aid. The average Boer is only too prone to accept gifts, but he has an instinctive horror of debts of all kinds. The keeping of personal accounts, and the knowledge that he might be called upon eventually to pay, checked him from becoming too deeply indebted even to a benevolent Government.

The district commissions were to be representative of the inhabitants—that is, presumably, of the strictly burgher element; for British subjects and foreigners were excluded from benefiting by the repatriation scheme in the Orange River Colony, and the Orange River Colony Volunteers were dealt with by their own ex-officers. Under these circumstances the members of the commissions were nominated by the Government mainly on the recommendation of the Central Repatriation Board.[2] In this nomination it must be admitted that the *wilde* Boer secured the strongest representation. That

[1] Letter dated June 25, 1902.

[2] 'I was fortunate in securing for this Central Board the services of a number of gentlemen of proved business capacity, who from long participation in affairs under the late Orange Free State had acquired an intimate knowledge both of local conditions and of the leading people in the various districts. Guided principally by their recommendations, I was able to appoint local district commissions that may be fairly said to have been representative, even at the outset, of the divergent interests in the individual districts' (extract from Sir Hamilton Goold Adams' Report, Cd. 1551, p. 47).

such should be the case was almost inevitable, because the work of repatriation had to be begun at once, and the guerilla was the only man available. An examination of the lists of members of local commissions will reveal the fact that numerically the last to surrender predominate.[1] This predominance possessed certain drawbacks in theory, because there was a danger of its leading to favouritism; in practice it worked out fairly successfully. The ex-Commandants displayed a praiseworthy keenness in the work, and the local information they possessed was frequently invaluable.

It will be readily understood that the Repatriation Department was never intended to be run on political lines. The majority of the members undoubtedly possessed the only essential qualifications, which were that they should be prominent citizens, likely to have the confidence of the inhabitants of their respective districts, and of known integrity. They were all men who could at least be expected to exercise a wise discretion with firmness in affording relief for the welfare of the people, even if they did not act always strictly in accordance with the interests of the Government.

The members of the local commissions numbered four, exclusive of the Resident Magistrate, who acted as chairman. The Resident Magistrates should certainly have been given a seat on the commissions, but the wisdom of appointing them chairmen was questioned at the commencement, and in the event many of them proved hardly a success. In the Orange River Colony their failure must be attributed to the fact that some of them were unfitted not only for repatriation, but for Government service of any kind. Several of them had served in the capacity of magistrates under the Free State Government, and had been allowed to continue in office under the military régime in the early days of the war, when the mistaken policy of conciliation was rampant. Others were drawn from the Civil Service of the Cape Colony, and had received their training in too narrow a sphere to fit them for respon-

[1] The Vredefort Commission was an exception in the first instance, but an ex-Boer Commandant was appointed later.

sible work. A certain number were selected from the irregular forces, and these proved, on the whole, to be the most successful so far as repatriation was concerned. The above is true generally speaking, but there were exceptions in each class. The real fault lay, not so much with the individual, as with the system under which he was appointed. The social upheaval caused by the South African war was tremendous, and it is generally true to say that the best material in the country was to be found fighting either on one side or the other. In anticipation that the war would close long before it actually did, a civil administration was appointed months before it was required. Under these circumstances many men of both nationalities were given appointments for which they were absolutely unfitted. It was understood that such appointments were merely temporary, and subject to revision and confirmation; but the majority of them have been made permanent, to the detriment of British administration in South Africa.

At the conclusion of hostilities, when more capable men were set free, the whole administration—both central and local—should have been thoroughly overhauled, and the inferior temporary official replaced. Had such a process of weeding out been adopted, admirable selections might have been made from the Dutch as well as from the British side.[1]

[1] 'As regards civil appointments, they are unattainable save with the aid of powerful home influence. Vacancies are almost invariably given to ex-Boer officials and returned prisoners of war. To say that you are a Britisher is the worst recommendation but one for a Government billet; the very worst is to say that you have fought for the Empire, or lost all you had because you were loyal. I used to think that there was a certain amount of cant about the phrase, "Loyalty doesn't pay in South Africa." I know now that it is the cold-drawn truth' (Mr. George Griffiths, in the *Daily Mail*, March 24, 1903).

'While they would undoubtedly be a source of danger politically if entirely neglected, yet as officials they are far more unpopular with the farmers than men fresh from home. . . . It is amusing to hear the sigh of relief with which a Boer learns that an official cannot speak his language, and the distrust with which he is regarded if he can' (*Monthly Review*, April, 1902).

'Hundreds are to be found in the various departments who have come to the country since the war, looking for plums which others had the pluck, manhood, and endurance to fight for through a long and arduous

The war afforded in quick succession opportunities of experience not to be acquired by years of service outside it. The Government, at its close, missed a chance of securing capable men which is unlikely to recur. The work of repatriation was certainly hampered by incapacity. But even had all the Resident Magistrates been men of profound ability, which they were not, it would have been a physical impossibility for them to adequately carry out the all-absorbing work of restoration and resettlement in the midst of their other numerous and multifarious administrative duties. One or other department of their work was bound to suffer under so severe a strain, and, had the Government realized originally the magnitude of the repatriation scheme, the department would assuredly have been allowed to appoint its own district representatives.[1]

As soon as the district commissions were constituted, those commissioners who had not already done so were called upon to take the oath of allegiance, and to swear to perform their functions as commissioners without fear, favour, or prejudice, to the best of their judgment, and to preserve secrecy as to their deliberations.

The district commissions were empowered to take evidence on oath from applicants and others, and to examine other impartial persons likely to know the previous condition, habits, mode of life and character, of those applying for assistance.

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campaign. There are thousands of those who fought through the war, and thus helped to win the country, who are now left stranded' (*Contemporary Review*, March, 1904).

[1] 'The affairs of the . . . Repatriation Board were grossly and carelessly mismanaged, and the Resident Magistrate was consequently called upon to resign his chairmanship. In self-defence he wrote as follows: "On many occasions I was tempted to ask permission to resign, as my own work was sufficient for me, and I had constantly to work in the evening, and adjourn cases to attend meetings, and be absent from my office on repatriation work . . . but I feared it would be thought I was trying to shirk my duties. I therefore refrained, and when . . . was sent here, and the letter to me stated that it was practically impossible for the magistrate here to discharge both offices, I received it with relief, mixed with a certain amount of gratification, that at all events I had not shirked attempting the impossible."'

The commissioners were instructed to meet at such times and places as they might deem best, and without delay to obtain statistics of the number of farms in their districts, the number and condition of their occupants, and to decide upon the quality and quantity of assistance and supply likely to be required. They were held and bound periodically to visit the farms of all recipients of either grants or loans, in order to report upon the manner in which the aid or loan was being applied, and for that purpose were expected to divide their districts into convenient sections for visitation.

The system obtaining in England, where so much of the local government is carried on by country gentlemen who receive no remuneration, could hardly be adopted in a country where the cost of living is so great that a pound a day is regarded as little more than a living wage. The commissioners could not be classed among the 'great unpaid'; both they and the magistrates received from repatriation funds an honorarium of £1 per diem, in addition to a travelling allowance of 15s. a day when visiting.[1]

Each commission was provided with an official who acted as secretary and accountant, and who was likewise sworn to allegiance, office, and secrecy. It was his duty to keep correct minutes of all proceedings, which were confirmed or otherwise at each subsequent meeting; to keep correct accounts of all aid granted or loans allowed; and to render monthly statements of all cases and amounts dealt with to the Central Commission.

At Bloemfontein was constituted a Central Board[2] (repatria-

[1] 'In order to insure the regularity of attendance essential to success, it was found expedient to remunerate the members of both the central and local commissions with an honorarium of £1 per diem, afterwards reduced to £1 for each sitting' (Parliamentary Paper, Cd. 1551).

The reason given for remunerating the Resident Magistrates of the Orange River Colony was that their salaries were not generally so high as those paid in the Transvaal, but it is not quite obvious why these salaries should have been augmented from Imperial funds. In the Transvaal the Resident Magistrates and the South African Constabulary District Commandants received no additional remuneration for acting as Repatriation Commissioners.

[2] The chairman of the Central Board was Sir J. G. Fraser, who had previously stood for the Presidency of the Orange Free State against Mr. Steyn.

tion) of control and advice, which exercised control over the transactions of the district commissions and supervised their proceedings. The decisions of this Central Board were binding upon the district commissions, who referred all cases in their districts which called for special treatment.

For the Boer the war had proved a period of disillusion, and at its close a great outlook had been cut off which had warmed his imagination for at least a quarter of a century. The dream of a united Dutch South Africa, apart from and outside the British Empire, had been dispelled; the cause for which he had struggled so long was a lost one, anyhow, for his generation. A more ancient belief had recently become incredible. The trial by battle had apparently decided that the Boer nation was no longer the Lord's chosen people, as had been fondly imagined. Both his political and religious convictions had been rudely shaken, and it could hardly be surprising if he mentally succumbed to so rude a shock. In the later stages the Boers had turned to guerilla warfare 'almost as men turn in despair to gambling or narcotics,' and war had been valued not as a means to an end, but for its own sake. For many weary months thousands had been leading an enervating and confined existence in the prisoners' and concentration camps. It was difficult for both the late surrenders and the returning prisoners of war to take up again the thread of everyday life, and to resume their ordinary occupations.[1] To the Boer all that had seemed worth living for had apparently disappeared. He was now called upon to take up his status as a citizen of an Empire that had world-wide interests, by the side of which things merely South African must appear insignificant. All periods of transition are disquieting to those who have to live through them; for so self-centred a nation as the Boers it was particularly difficult to accept the new order of things.

[1] 'They had to deal with a people whose energies were at least weakened or exhausted by demoralization and defeat, and who would be likely to require an unusual amount of help from others before they would undertake with due seriousness and perseverance the task of helping themselves' (*The Times*, September 28, 1903).

As the blockhouse system and barbed-wire entanglements gradually enveloped his country, so must the Boer have felt the coils of red-tapism, from which he had trekked north fifty years before, slowly but surely encircling his heart. The formation of the Repatriation Department was intended to act as a sort of artificial stimulant to induce him to recover his mental balance, and to find some way of making the best of a changed world. At this time of *Sturm und Drang*, when his nerves were unstrung and his country wrecked, it must have been a source of considerable consolation to the leading Boers to be called upon by the new Government to take an active and leading part in the work of restoration and resettlement. It might have been expected also that it was some satisfaction to their poorer countrymen to know that they had their own representatives on the Repatriation Boards. But such was not the case. 'As I have stated,' wrote Mr. E. F. Knight in the record of his tour through outlying districts of the Orange River Colony in January, 1903, 'the one grievance of the bijwoners whom I met on the road was the appointment of Dutchmen as compensation and repatriation officers. It was maintained that the Dutch officials would favour their own friends, whereas British officers would be impartial, and do their utmost to be absolutely fair.'[1]

The remaining personnel of the Repatriation Department—what may be termed the executive, in contradistinction to the advisory boards, which have already been examined—consisted literally of the 'chronic Ikonas' of more than 'five nations.' The vast majority of the employees, from the highest to the lowest rank, had served during the war in some capacity on one side or the other. The interpreters, storemen, and conductors were usually of Dutch extraction, but nearly every European nationality and every British colony was represented.

[1] 'South Africa after the War,' p. 197. 'With regard to the future administration of the country, the burghers all declared they hoped they would be closely associated with British officers, in whom they have complete confidence' (General Elliott's Report on Surrender of Orange Free State Commandos, Cd. 988).



Some of the Headquarter Staff.

It is necessary to point out the immense variety of repatriation officials in the Orange River Colony in order to apportion the just amount of either praise or blame which may eventually be allotted to their work. They were 'the push you require,' but they were also the 'orphans they blame.'[1] By the home press the work of repatriation has been hailed as a huge success;[2] by a large portion of the South African press it has been stigmatized as a 'melancholy fiasco' and a 'dismal failure.'[3] Both estimates are probably equally incorrect. The first was taken more or less on trust, and was based presumably on a series of articles by a repatriation officer contributed to *The Times*. These articles treated of repatriation in the Transvaal only. Except by those immediately concerned, to whom the task of repatriation was probably at the moment too absorbingly interesting and the actual day's work too heavy for them to think of anything else or to trouble what other people might think of them,[4] very little is

[1] 'The Five Nations,' by Rudyard Kipling, p. 164.

[2] *Vide The Times* and other papers. 'The opinion of a correspondent of the *Neues Wiener Tagblatt* is interesting. He describes the repatriation of the burghers, and after paying a compliment to the organizing talent of the Englishmen, which he says has again been displayed in a magnificent way in this gigantic work, he proceeds: 'The achievement is so unique that to believe in it one must have seen its inception and progress with one's own eyes. I am one of those who frequently gnashed their teeth over the English as fighters, or who laughed at them; but about what they have performed in time of peace there is but one opinion and one sentiment amongst all who saw it on the spot—that they are a nation which knows how to rule' (*Standard*, December 8, 1903).

[3] *Vide* Bloemfontein *Friend*, *passim*.

'When the history of the Repatriation Department comes to be written,' says the *Rand Daily Mail*, 'a condition of affairs will be revealed such as was never heard of before in any Government Department. The good done by this department is far more than counterbalanced by the evil which has resulted from its misplaced energies.'

'The work of repatriation is a complete and dismal failure' (General Botha, letter in *The Times*, July 15, 1903).

'We could fill the pages of this paper with proofs of the fact that repatriation proved to a great extent a hollow sham, and that the repatriators were in many instances the gainers from a policy which, though well meant, proved a failure, and an expensive one in every respect' (*Friend*, July 10, 1903).

[4] 'All the principal actors are so overwhelmed with the daily work of administration that they really have no time to spare for writing about it' (Cd. 1551).

generally known of the actual working and organization of the Orange River Colony Department. The subject aroused, apparently, little interest in England, and notices in the press are few and far between. The correspondents who accompanied Mr. Chamberlain on his South African tour made no inquiries on the spot, and by *The Times* commissioner in Johannesburg the department was completely ignored.

The failure of repatriation has generally been attributed by the South African opposition press to the fact that the work was carried out by a number of imported officials, who knew not the country, the language, or the people.[1] From what has been already stated as to the composition of the district commissions and the executive, it will be obvious that the conclusion arrived at cannot be substantiated by actual facts. Whatever may have been the success or failure of the repatriation scheme, the praise or blame allotted must be shared or borne equally by Dutch as well as English. If mistakes were made—and it must be admitted that mistakes were frequent—then the Dutch dare not disclaim a responsibility which they were paid for undertaking.

The question of success or failure is, after all, one of degree. It is difficult to know exactly what was expected of repatriation by General Louis Botha, Lord Courtney, Miss Emily Hobhouse, and other of its critics.[2] It is probable that the whole scheme would have been better and more economically carried out if the fund had been administered by one British officer in each district with large discretionary powers. It is undoubtedly true that local antipathies and

[1] But such ignorant criticism was not confined to South Africa. 'The main cause of this waste, no doubt, has been the neglect to provide proper representation on the Repatriation Boards of those whose interests they were intended to serve. Ignorance of the country and of the people has been at the bottom of these peace scandals, as it was at the bottom of the war scandals' (*Manchester Guardian*, September 3, 1903).

The following is a still more pitiable exhibition of ignorance: 'The boards which administered the funds which Parliament voted consisted for the most part of National Scouts, and they have either absorbed the funds which they administered in personal expenses, or else they have distributed them among their own partisans' (*Echo*, September 2, 1903).

[2] *Vide Manchester Guardian* and *Times*, July 15, 1903.

local prejudices frequently influenced the decisions of the district commissioners, and cases of unfair treatment were not unknown. The Government might possibly have obtained better administrative material by introducing a number of Indian officials who had had experience of coping with famine, drought, and plague in that country, or by drawing more largely from the staff of the regular army. But it will be remembered that, in accordance with the wording of Article X., the inhabitants had to be represented on the district commissions; the knowledge of local conditions, which their representatives possessed, could hardly have been acquired by freshly imported officials in a few months.

Now that the burden of the day is past, it is possible to look back and appraise the methods adopted. It is easy to be wise after the event. In the affairs of ordinary life, however, there is a somewhat trite maxim to the effect that experience must be bought. There is no reason to believe, as will be shown later by actual figures, that the purchase of repatriation experience proved on the whole more costly than most others.[1] But, on the other hand, even if the general organization be accepted as sound, it must be admitted that it was characterized at the commencement by certain grave omissions of what may almost be termed administrative routine.

Beyond the general instructions already noted, which were vague in the extreme and did not enter into details, neither the powers of the Central Board nor those of the district

[1] 'Repatriation is, like war, a complex business where time is of the essence of the contract, and there is bound to be a leakage. To ask for the methods of a long-established department is like complaining that a soldier on active service is less tidy than on parade. The alternative to these much-criticised mistakes was the far graver misfortune of a starving country and costly and overgrown camps of refuge' (*Quarterly Review*, July, 1905).

'The one thing essential, the one thing imperative, when we took over this country—a total wreck, with half its population in exile, with no administrative machinery whatever, and as far as the plant of Government was concerned, with the scantiest equipment of any civilized country in the world—was to make it a going concern again as soon as possible. We could not stand fiddling over small economies while people starved' (extract from Lord Milner's farewell speech at Pretoria, March 22, 1905).

commissions were ever clearly defined. On June 9, 1902, a conference of Resident Magistrates was held at Bloemfontein, to discuss the terms of Article X.; but no minutes of this important meeting were kept, and no record of the conclusions arrived at exists. The natural result was that each magistrate departed to his district with a comparatively vague idea of what he was expected to do and of the responsibility he was undertaking.

Yet the powers of the district commissions were considerable. They decided what persons in their respective districts should receive aid and what should not. They could grant loans on approved security up to £400. In their hands was the disposal of appointments on the local staff, subject to confirmation by the Central Board. They advised generally what purchases should be made to meet the requirements of their districts. They allotted animals for ploughing and corn for sowing. All these powers were obviously open to grave abuse, and they in many cases were abused. Billets were given to friends and relatives by those who studied their private interests more than the public good. The commissioners were for the most part comparatively wealthy men, but in many cases they did not scruple to use for ploughing their own land the animals which were intended for their poorer countrymen. There was considerable scope in the purchasing of food-stuffs and cattle for combining private enterprise with public service.

If abuses occurred, however, it was difficult to fix the responsibility. Dismissal or accepted resignation was slight compensation, from a financial point of view, for funds which had been misappropriated and material which had been wasted. The members of the commissions were temporarily paid officials, and their responsibility should have been fixed

[1] 'I consider, however, that it is necessary to give some defined status and legal power to the officials who are engaged in carrying out both land settlement and repatriation' (extract from Lord Milner's Letter, O.R.C., No. 63, dated June 10, 1902). In the case of repatriation this was never done. It was never clear whether the Central Commission was intended to be merely an advisory board or something more. Its decisions were frequently overruled by the Lieutenant-Governor.

accordingly. There was little or no actual or intentional dishonesty; the majority of 'repatriation scandals' were due to lack of organization originally, and later to want of proper supervision. But, whatever may have been their cause, they reflect most severely both on the commissions concerned and on the headquarter staff. It is only fair to the authorities, however, to state that, had the question of responsibility been clearly laid down, much difficulty would have been experienced in prevailing upon men of standing to serve on the commissions.

In so gigantic an undertaking the system of accounting was necessarily somewhat involved, and for its proper understanding required more than a passing acquaintance with accounts. But the chairmen were allowed to recommend their own accountants, and, instead of these gentlemen being carefully selected and trained for a short time at headquarters, they were sent out to their districts with a bundle of instructions which were sufficiently precise, but which each interpreted according to his own lights.[1] This resulted in endless confusion, which later took months to unravel and rectify. Consequently, the work thrown upon the central accounts office was enormous. Moreover, for the first six months of the department's existence no auditor and travelling inspectors were appointed.

As the magnitude of the task revealed itself, it was found that the whole time of the secretaries appointed to the district commissions was taken up with their executive duties, in attempting to deal with the numerous and varied wants of the returning population. One district reported as early as August, and the report was typical of those received from many others, 'that the secretary was fully employed till late every night with his secretarial and executive duties, that he could not find time to keep the books, and that a competent accountant was absolutely necessary to help in carrying out the laborious system required.' But not until the following November, by which time the Repatriation Department had supplied the material for one *cause célèbre* to the criminal

[1] *Vide* Appendix A, p. 263.

annals of the Orange River Colony, did the Central Board grant additional clerical assistance. Their anxiety to curtail working expenses as much as possible was not unnatural, but their policy in this connection proved in the event to be a penny wise and a pound foolish. When inspectors of accounts were later appointed, the books of many of the local commissions were found to be in a hopeless muddle. There was particularly little actual dishonesty. Mistakes were numerous, but they were almost without exception found on examination to be due to indifference in some cases and to ignorance in more. The commissioners were rather inclined to ignore the financial part of their functions, and, when reminded of their responsibilities, complained, and not without reason, that they were hampered in their executive duties. 'In this connection,' wrote one chairman, 'it would appear to me that the chairman of a commission should be responsible for the executive functions of his office, the general supervision of stock and stores, the receipt and disbursement of public moneys; but the many harassing details, such as whether an item is entered under one head or another, the correctness of a figure amounting at times only to a few halfpence, the checking of every pound of coffee and every ounce of salt, should certainly not rest personally on the chairman.' Another chairman wrote: 'The system of book-keeping was too involved and led to many mistakes. There were a great many changes from time to time, which not only created confusion, but made the actual office-work more exacting than was necessary. The system of notes and queries was carried to excess, causing much vexation of spirit.'

There is little doubt that, so far as the financial side of repatriation was concerned, fully-qualified men were required. Unhappily, such men, with a few notable exceptions, were not at the time forthcoming. The Britisher usually muddles through most things with some success, but muddling through in financial matters is unsound. It provoked much criticism throughout the course of repatriation, and it necessitated later the creation of a special Audit Department, which did

not conclude its onerous and difficult task until long after the Repatriation Department had closed down.[1]

Such criticisms as the foregoing may appear justifiable after the event, but it is really difficult to see how certain omissions could at the time have been avoided. It will be readily understood that the organization, which has been outlined, did not spring up in a night. To form a Repatriation Department, with district committees, before the conclusion of peace would not only have been expensive, but was literally impossible—if for no other reason, for lack of men. The regular army could spare no officers; the irregular corps were still in the field; men, who might otherwise have been available were employed in the refugee camps. The majority of Resident Magistrates had not proceeded to their districts; martial law still reigned, and the civil authorities were practically powerless. The date of peace was gloriously uncertain, and the declaration probably came as more or less of a surprise to even the principal negotiators at Vereeniging. That some sort of extraordinary organization to replace the absentee population would be required had been realized months before, but what form exactly such an organization would take it was impossible to know before Article X. was framed and agreed to. Moreover, the exigencies of the case were such that probably no cut-and-dried scheme would have been found to work. The absence of historical precedent and any guide for comparison, the impossibility of obtaining trained men for a task which had never been attempted before, made gradual development the essential characteristic of the scheme. It could not possibly have been carried out on hard-and-fast lines; difficulties which could hardly be anticipated had to be dealt with as they arose. Initial blunders were inseparable from a department suddenly organized and composed of necessarily untrained men, which was called upon to deal hastily with a situation unprecedented in history.[2]

[1] Parliamentary Paper, Cd. 2104, p. 124.

[2] 'It was a brand-new department, doing brand-new work, with a staff who had never seen each other and had no idea of what work they had to do' (*Monthly Review*, April, 1903).

## CHAPTER IV

### DIVERS DIFFICULTIES

'From hence let fierce contending nations know
What dire effects from civil discord flow.'—ADDISON.

'A sudden thought strikes me—let us swear an eternal friendship.'—FRERE.

'But whispering tongues can poison truth.'—COLERIDGE.

'Ils n'employent les paroles que pour déguiser leurs pensées.'—VOLTAIRE.

IT has sometimes seemed as if the modest little Orange River Colony would never succeed in commanding the amount of public attention to which its inhabitants, either rightly or wrongly, consider it to be entitled. By its geographical position it has been obscured from the notice of the world. 'To the north of it,' says a recent writer, 'glitters that El Dorado of South Africa, Johannesburg. On the west blaze the diamond-mines of Kimberley. On the east lies the go-ahead colony of Natal; and on the south it is cut off from civilization by hundreds of miles of Karoo country.'[1] And yet, to whatever extent they may have been generally ignored, the difficulties of repatriation in the Orange River Colony were in no degree less than those which confronted the authorities in the Transvaal. Many of these difficulties were foreseen and provided for; others were only realized when the actual replacing of the absentee population came to be undertaken.

The report of the War Commission has demonstrated to

[1] 'The Engineer in South Africa,' p. 149.

what an extent we blundered into war; it is equally certain that we blundered into peace. 'We learn from General de Wet's book that before peace was made the enemy were at their last gasp. This was known to Lord Kitchener, and through him to the Government. But instead of fighting to a finish, as they were pledged to do, they allowed the Boers to surrender on terms. Why? Not because wisdom dictated it, but because the people of England wanted to be generous to a fallen foe. Mr. Chamberlain knew that it violated every military, political, and moral consideration, and that it enabled the Boers to save their nationality from utter extinction. Therefore, England gave them a trump card after the second Transvaal war, as she gave them a trump card after the first Transvaal war, and for the same reasons.'[1] It was not unnatural for a popular monarch to echo the wishes of his people. His Majesty desired that peace should reign on the occasion of his coronation.[2] People at home may have been glad to know that His Majesty's desire had been fulfilled, but it is hardly necessary to point out that their gladness was not shared by those who had borne the heat and burden of the day in the South African war. The staying of our hand at the last moment may have gratified the English constituencies, but, as will be seen later, it only served to render more difficult the task of repatriation.

However much the administration may have desired to treat all alike, without drawing any distinction on account of political creed, the Repatriation Department could hardly expect to escape contact with the feud existing between the so-called 'hands oppers' and those who had fought to the finish. The ideal polity of a few years before had been shattered by the war into a series of somewhat discordant elements. 'In the Orange Free State,' wrote Mr. Bryce, 'I

[1] *Empire Review*, January, 1903.

[2] 'The Lord Mayor, in proposing "The King," said they could not forget the interest which His Majesty had manifested in South Africa, and his desire to see peace proclaimed before he was crowned. They were glad to know that His Majesty's aspiration was gratified' (*Standard*, March 21, 1903).

discovered in 1895 the kind of commonwealth which the fond fancy of the philosophers of the last century painted. It is an ideal commonwealth not in respect of any special excellence in its institutions, but because the economic and social conditions, which have made democracy so far from an unmixed success in the American States and in the larger colonies of Great Britain, not to speak of the peoples of Europe, whether ancient or modern, have not come into existence here, while the external dangers, which for a time threatened the State, have—years ago—vanished away like clouds into the blue.'[1] Mr. Bryce's impression will hardly be found to coincide with that which the Secretary of State for the Colonies gained in his tour a few years later. 'It is perfectly obvious,' said Mr. Chamberlain at Bloemfontein, 'that there are serious divisions among the people of this colony . . . and I myself fear that feeling runs even higher than it does in the Transvaal between those of the citizens who fought to the last and those who conscientiously believed that it was their patriotic duty to do all in their power to bring the war to a close.' In the capital of the Orange River Colony Mr. Chamberlain found himself in the very thick of the controversy between the guerillas and the Orange River Colony Volunteers.[2] Two of the deputations which waited upon him were headed respectively by the brothers De Wet, and he was not slow to see in them 'divisions which separate men of the same race, even of the same family.' This bitter feeling has been throughout fanned by the Dutch Reformed Church, and it dominates the relations of the best educated as well as the most ignorant classes.

'The breach between "hands oppers" and the irreconcilable Boers is as wide as ever. The Church still thunders against those who surrendered. As a tool of the Bond the Reformed Church is doing well all over South Africa in its ungodlike work of keeping sores open.'[3] In the correspondence between

[1] Bryce, 'Impressions of South Africa.'

[2] Mr. Chamberlain reached Bloemfontein on January 31, 1903.

[3] *Morning Post*, January 28, 1904. See also *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, January 1, 1904: 'Many of these Dutch predicants hold the worst repu-

Sir Arthur Lawley and the Rev. H. S. Bosman may be read the reasons for the views taken and the policy adopted by both parties in this controversy. Whatever the wrongs or the rights of the case may be, whatever the motive of the British for accepting assistance from their late enemies, and the motive of the latter for rendering it, it is undoubtedly true that the split created is one of the most painful results of the war.[1]

Great Britain could hardly leave in the lurch those who had helped her. Moreover, although no definite promises had been made to them, there had been throughout their service a sort of tacit understanding that men who had served with the Orange River Colony Volunteers, the Bloemfontein Farmers' Guard, and the Field Intelligence Department, would receive prior consideration on the conclusion of peace, and be given special facilities to enable them to return to their homes and recommence their civil avocations. The high political feeling which exercised the minds of the two sections of the Boer community at the close of hostilities made it almost impossible to persuade the adherents of one section that they could expect fair treatment at the hands of the other. In the Transvaal the National Scouts were represented on the district repatriation boards ; in the Orange River Colony special representation was refused them. A further difficulty was experienced in the fact that a 'guerilla' and a 'scout' could not be induced to use the same waggon or team in common, or to lend animals or implements to one another, although this course was necessitated by the shortage

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tation as agitators, and their influence over the ignorant multitude is as great as it is pernicious. No element in the country is more bitterly anti-British, and as a body they will leave no stone unturned to wreck the best efforts of administration. The abuse of priestly authority and the power of religious tyranny have never received more melancholy and striking illustration than among these dour Calvinistic doppers of the high veld.'

[1] Whether it was wise thus from the first to impress it upon our enemy that disloyalty to his own side was to be the equivalent for the sympathy he was to expect from ours might perhaps be arguable' (*Edinburgh Review*, April, 1904).

of supplies then in the country. In the press of work it was not possible for the ordinary Repatriation Commissions to undertake such full work of inquiry into local feeling as would insure arrangements for mutual working between the families of the late surrender and families boycotted by the general community and by the Dutch Reformed Church. Delays, however unavoidable, were ascribed to the covert hostility of 'guerilla' members; the quality of the animals served out from the depots was similarly questioned when, as was inevitable, any late surrender was employed on the depot staff.

These circumstances led to the receipt by the Government of several petitions from large bodies of ex-burghers who had joined the British forces. The effect of these petitions was the establishment of a special organization, called the 'Orange River Colony Volunteer Repatriation Department,' which was charged with investigating the cases of all ex-burghers who claimed to have served on the British side. If on examination the record and length of service (minimum three months) were found to be satisfactory, and the material circumstances of the man and his family to necessitate repatriation aid, an advance in kind of £50 worth of seeds, implements, rations, animals, vehicles, etc., as found most suitable to each case, was issued by the Volunteer Repatriation Organization.[1] The cost was defrayed by imprest from the Orange River Colony Repatriation Department as part of the general expense of repatriation. The advances were signed for on an approved form of promissory note, to be repayable out of any compensation moneys due to the recipient, or to be repayable within two years on the demand of the Lieutenant-Governor. The names of persons assisted by the Volunteer Repatriation were notified to the Resident Magistrate of the district, and the recipients were warned that they would receive no further aid from the ordinary Repatriation Commissions.

[1] Similar assistance was also afforded to the widows of ex-burghers who had lost their lives on the British side in the course of the military operations (*vide* Cd. 1551, p. 60).

It will be evident that in the Orange River Colony the preferential treatment accorded to the volunteers was inconsiderable. Doubtless it was a source of satisfaction to them to be treated differently from the ordinary ex-burgher, and to be dealt with by their own ex-officers. But, in view of the fact that the ration accounts alone of destitute families amounted in many cases to £100 and upwards under the ordinary scheme, it must be admitted that an advance of £50 in kind was comparatively small. 'The aim of Government must always be to eliminate in the course of time all distinctions between the different sections of the population.' The constitution of burgher corps to fight on the British side may have been undertaken originally from political motives, but the line adopted by the Orange River Colony Administration in connection with the repatriation of the volunteers goes far to disprove that it desired in any way to perpetuate the political and social breach produced by the war.[1]

It has already been pointed out that British subjects resident in the Free State previous to the war were excluded from benefiting by the provisions of Article X. of the Deed of Settlement. This article, not the least obscure perhaps of that curious contract, was very generally misread and misunderstood. One of the most disagreeable tasks of the repatriation official, when an Englishman, was to explain to one of his fellow-countrymen that, as the latter was not an ex-burgher, he was not entitled to the amount of assistance accorded to his Dutch neighbour.[2] No distinction of nationality was drawn by the Repatriation Department in the provision of

[1] 'Lord Milner has always recognised the fact that the great obstacle in the way of "Anglicizing" South Africa is the veldt, and has favoured every means for getting as much of it as possible out of the hands of the Dutch, and into the hands of men pledged to British interests. It seemed reasonable to suppose that the loyalty to our side of men who had turned their rifles upon their own might be relied upon' (*Edinburgh Review*, April, 1904).

[2] The following is one of numerous instances: An English farmer, who owned 18,000 acres of land unmortgaged, applied for a loan of £5,000 on repatriation terms, on the ground that he acted as an intelligence officer during the war. In more than one instance municipalities applied to the department for loans on repatriation terms!

rations and transport in the first instance for the return home, but for further assistance, whereas the ex-burgher was given credit, the Britisher had to pay cash. It is true that £2,000,000 was appropriated to the compensation of loyalists, and Britishers were enabled to get early advances up to one-third of the amounts at which their claims were assessed. This might have sufficed for the well-to-do, but some more immediate means of relief was felt to be necessary for the poorer Britons. Poverty, unfortunately, is wonderfully cosmopolitan, and the poor white class in South Africa is not wholly Dutch.

Confined in its scope and limited in its resources, the British Refugee Aid Department was instituted with the object of helping deserving British subjects, where no other assistance from Government sources was forthcoming. The general rule regarding help from this department was that it should only be given in the cases of thoroughly staunch Britishers to restart them in life, either by advances against probable compensation or, in very exceptional cases, without security, repayable by monthly instalments. Only the most impecunious cases were dealt with, cases where pledgeable assets were practically non-existent. How very limited in its scope and how temporary in its character the department actually was may be seen from Article IX. of its constitution : 'It must be distinctly understood that, while the Government is prepared, through the agency of the committees, to assist distressed refugees on their immediate arrival, and will endeavour to enable them to find work or make a fresh start, it recognises no obligation to go further, and cannot provide for anything more than their temporary relief.'

The Orange River Colony Relief Works Department was formed with the object of providing employment for indigent burghers or 'poor whites,' and to assist in ridding the refugee camps of people whom it was otherwise impossible to repatriate. In order that the schemes undertaken by the department should prove as remunerative as possible, it was decided that they should consist principally of dams and other irrigation works on Government farms. By the execution of such

works it was felt that the Government would not only gain, in return for the sums expended, whatever increment ensued from the placing under irrigation many acres of land, but that it would also benefit by the largely increased number of holdings available for settlement. Five camps were started: at Strijdfontein, near Kroonstad; Kramsdraai, near Bethulie; Mushroom Valley, near Winburg; Parijs, on the Vaal River; and Tweespruit, near Thaba N'Chu. In the first four of these, irrigation work was undertaken; in the last, a five-mile section of the Bloemfontein-Ladybrand Railway. The wage for men was 4s. 6d. a day. Boys from twelve to eighteen years of age were given employment suited to their years, and rated at sums from 1s. 6d. to 3s. per diem, according to their ability. Employment was found for the women when possible, and many of them received 2s. a day for mending tents and work of a similar nature. Stores, schools, hospitals, and churches were established in these camps. The cost of relief works was borne by repatriation funds, and an additional grant of £10 was paid for each family taken.[1]

From a financial point of view the expenditure of Government money on relief works certainly proved an unprofitable investment, but from a moral and educational standpoint their establishment was of no little importance. They undoubtedly induced the Boer, temporarily at least, 'to apply himself seriously to manual labour as a means of livelihood, and to make a break from his old traditions that life was only worth living when one could sit on a stoep, smoke a pipe, and watch natives leisurely at work on the minimum amount of land necessary for the support of the Boer family and themselves.'[2]

[1] *Vide* Cd. 1551.

[2] *The Times*, January 13, 1903.

'There is a senseless prejudice in South Africa against white manual labour, for which the old Boer farmers are mainly responsible. They interpreted the curse of Ham literally. The black man was created to work for the white; therefore it was beneath the dignity of his natural master to toil at similar tasks' (*Daily Mail*, March 5, 1903).

'Until recently it was a comparatively rare occurrence to find a white man working upon the land, or, indeed, performing any kind of manual

The subject of land settlement is a large one, and has naturally received a vast amount of attention, both in the public press and in official circles. So much has been said and written on the numerous land settlement schemes in the two colonies that it is perhaps unnecessary to recapitulate their various features and provisions here. Although possibly the most interesting, and certainly not the least important, portion of the task of reconstruction, British land settlement does not properly fall within the scope of a volume dealing with repatriation. Both the Repatriation and Land Settlement Departments were, as already stated, originally intended to form different branches of one Land Board; but the connection proved in the event to be merely a paper one. The Repatriation Department extended, as in the case of the rest of the population, an initial helping hand to the original batch of settlers in reaching their holdings, and they were allowed to purchase for cash whatever they required from the repatriation depots, which continued for some months to be practically their only source of supply.[1] But this was all. The work of the Orange River Colony Land Settlement

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labour; not that the climate is unsuited to it, but because in the early days black labour was so cheap and abundant that there was no necessity for white men to use their hands, and because of it being considered beneath the dignity of a white man to work with a black, or to do work which could be performed by the latter. But owing to the changes wrought by the war, and to the influx of new settlers, who are perforce obliged to work in order to obtain a living, this attitude is being rapidly broken down' (Cd. 2104).

'Indirectly the relief works have had another and beneficial result: by collecting the children into camps they have enabled the Education Department to continue with the least educated section of the community the good work it had begun in the refugee camps' (Sir Hamilton Goold Adams, Cd. 1551, p. 9).

[1] The assistance rendered by the Repatriation Department to new settlers in the Transvaal was very much greater. 'It having been decided by His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor of the Transvaal that assistance should be given to British subjects who have come into the country since the beginning of the war with the object of settling down on the land, assistance may be given to such persons up to a total amount of £200 in kind. The amount due for such assistance will be repayable in two years, and interest will be charged thereon at the rate of 3 per cent. per annum' (Transvaal Repatriation Department, Circular Letter, No. 101).

Department will, consequently, be outlined as briefly as possible, and the only object in view is to draw attention to the fact that, so far as the Orange River Colony is concerned, the settlement of Britons on the land has been less extensive perhaps than is generally supposed.[1]

Ever since the annexation in May, 1900, the question of land settlement had been under discussion. A commission was appointed by the Imperial Government to investigate the agricultural resources of the country, and to recommend what facilities should be offered to intending settlers. The result of that investigation is contained in the following extract from the commissioners' report: 'Dealing with the question as a whole,' they wrote, 'we desire to express our firm conviction that a well-considered scheme of settlement in South Africa by men of British origin is of the most vital importance to the future prosperity of British South Africa. We find among those who wish to see British rule maintained and its influence for good extended but one opinion on this subject. There even seems reason to fear lest the vast expenditure of blood and treasure which has marked the war should be absolutely wasted unless some strenuous effort be made to establish in the country, at the close of the war, a thoroughly British population, large enough to make a recurrence of division and disorder impossible. We venture to believe that to this end some sacrifice may be reasonably made, and that a certain amount of pecuniary loss at the outset may be contemplated with equanimity, in view of the value of the result to be attained, and of the certainty that if that result be achieved, any expenditure will be recouped and any loss retrieved.' Perhaps never has a commission shown a fuller knowledge of its subject, or been more emphatic in its recommendations. Those recommendations have hitherto lost nothing of their force, and the danger foreshadowed is possibly more real to-day than when the above report was written.[2]

[1] The terms on which land settlers are accepted are given in Appendix B, p. 267.

[2] 'Just as I am anxious to see a portion of the Dutch population engaged in industrial and commercial pursuits and sharing the interests of

In consequence of this report many schemes were subsequently put forward and applied to a greater or less extent in the Transvaal. These will not be dealt with. Attention will be directed to the Orange River Colony only, where it will be seen that the Land Settlement Department has been extremely limited in its action, and that little has been done to leaven with a healthy progressive British element the stolid, backward, rural Dutch population. The small results hitherto achieved must not be attributed to any lack of energy on the part of the department concerned. They have been due to a scarcity of land in the first instance, and later to lack of funds to purchase more. 'In the Orange River Colony,' wrote Lord Milner, 'the land in the possession of the Government, and any that we are likely to acquire, is limited in amount. It will be as much as we can do for some time to come to provide for those would-be settlers, mostly men who have served through the war, who have what may be called a 'preferential' claim upon us, and the amount of land which can be offered to applicants at home or in other parts of the British Empire is never likely to be large.'[1] Lord Milner's forecast has been only too thoroughly verified by subsequent events, as will be seen by anyone who cares to peruse the Blue-Books on the subject.[2] The number of applicants for land in February, 1903, was 4,864. On June 7, 1906, the settlers to whom land had been allotted numbered 660.[3] These figures

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the British majority, so I am desirous that the solid mass of the Dutch rural population should be leavened by an influx of farmers of the British race, provided they are of the right type. To describe such a policy as hostile to the Dutch appears absolutely unreasonable' (Lord Milner, Cd. 1551).

[1] Cd. 1551, p. 13.

[2] The following are some of the references: Cd. 1551, pp. 100-103; Cd. 2104, pp. 2, 138; Cd. 2482, p. 34; Cd. 3028, p. 1.

[3] In view of responsible government being granted to the Orange River Colony, a pathetic plea from the settlers in the Thaba N'Chu district to be 'kept under the direct administration for the present of the home Government' appeared in *The Times* of August 18, 1906. 'The Boer has seen us,' they wrote, 'assist our Empire in conquering him; he has watched our ineffectual struggle with Nature, and when we are in reduced circumstances we are put under his control. Is this a good object-lesson of the rewards of loyalty? We contend (rightly, we believe) that the Boer will

indicate to how extremely limited an extent the demand for land has been met.

There have been innumerable difficulties, of which but a few can here be noted. The land inherited from the late Orange Free State Government consisted principally of dry and undeveloped farms in the western districts, which have not been made more valuable or suitable for settlement purposes by the continued droughts. During these droughts the position of many settlers became critical. In 1903 the rains came too late, and 'though good mealie crops were reaped, early frosts (owing to the enforced late sowing) made the greater portion of these crops worthless for the market. Large swarms of locusts settled and bred in the southern and south-eastern portions of the colony during the month of May, eating up the young wheat, oat crops ready for harvesting, and the sweet veldt matured for winter use, over a large tract of country.' Owing to these set-backs the Government sanctioned a certain amount of grace in the payment of the first instalments due, and the issue of special loans was authorized for the purchase of seed and fencing material. Still the settlers held bravely on, a number 'existing on mealie meal only in order to retain their holdings.' But bad seasons have continued, and extraordinary measures have

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respect a Government more which stands to protect us until we are independently placed. Again, have we a right to expect a sympathetic attitude from him? He believes we are part of a hopeless scheme, and, as such, is it natural to expect support? He believes we have robbed his poorer brethren of their land, and, as such, can we ask him to perpetuate it? Much as they respect us individually, and amicably as we may live together, they are different men when collectively they form part of a political organization.'

'Why British soldiers are allowed to starve in London streets when the new territories are calling aloud for men is one of those mysteries which shame us to explain. We are ready enough to remember generosity when our enemies are in question, but unready to remember our duty to those who did our work for us, forgetting that we may act thus once too often. . . . There must be an organized system of emigration to South Africa for years to come, and it must be under the control of the Government. In no other way can the race problem be settled; in no other way can the Afrikanders be made to understand that their ideal is impossible; in no other way can South Africa work out her own political salvation' (*Empire Review*).

been repeatedly taken to enable them to tide over reverses. In spite of difficulties, however, the demand for land continues on the part of men who have what Lord Milner has termed a 'preferential' claim, and it is to be seriously regretted that that demand is not being met. The latest report of the Director of the Orange River Colony Land Settlement Department was far from reassuring. 'Practically every acre,' he wrote, 'of purchased land available for allotment to settlers has been taken up and remains occupied, and there are numbers of suitable applicants anxious to occupy land under Government terms, who cannot possibly be accommodated at present, there being no funds available for further purchases. The majority of these men own sufficient in the way of stock, implements, and capital to insure success, but they are not in a position to purchase land outright. Hiring land is unsatisfactory from many points of view, and these men, some of whom are descendants of the settlers who came out to Cape Colony in 1820, and others sons of Natal landowners, all of whom gave their services to the Imperial Government in the late war, are only waiting for land to be offered them.'[1]

The natural difficulties surrounding the work of repatriation were partly permanent, inseparable from the climatic conditions of the country itself, and partly circumstantial, produced by the devastating policy of the late war. The Orange River Colony, unlike France, did not readily lend itself to quick recovery. 'Apart from the development of its gold, diamond, and coal mines, South Africa has remained strangely stationary. Fifty years ago it was a pastoral country, importing cereals and dairy produce, and even hay, from foreign countries. It is the same to-day. Half a century ago it needed a farm of 5,000 acres to keep a family in decent comfort; to-day it needs the same farm of 5,000 acres to

[1] Cd. 3028, p. 2, published July, 1906.

'While the land companies look out upon unpeopled wastes and the Government is tied hand and foot, the indigenous multitude makes progress, and renews its strength in the soil and its hold upon the land' (*Magazine of Commerce*, November, 1903).

keep a single family in comfort. Except in the extreme south-western corner of Cape Colony, agriculture has scarcely been attempted save on the most primitive lines and on the most insignificant areas. Farmers to-day trek from the high veldt to the low veldt and back again with the seasons, just as the wandering Arabs of the desert have done for centuries. The reason for this want of development of the agricultural wealth of the country, and the consequent acute stage of the poor white question, lies in the fact that the rainfall of the three colonies, with the exception of the extreme south-western corner, is not only erratic and uncertain at the times most opportune for sowing, but is constant and heavy in autumn. Autumn, again, is quickly followed by a severe and frosty winter, without a particle of moisture in the air. When rain is wanted it is generally not there; when it is not wanted it is invariably present.'[1]

The chaos wrought by three years' war in this semi-arid region has been graphically described by an officer of the Transvaal Repatriation Department: 'A country intersected by lines of blockhouses, each connected with its neighbour by barbed-wire entanglements, which for military purposes cut the veldt off into squares, in which the various roving commandos could be the more easily dealt with. Within these squares everything in the form of sheep, cattle, horses, etc., had been driven away, every house demolished, whole towns totally destroyed, everything movable removed, and everything immovable destroyed, and the work done thoroughly. The whole fabric of the former rural society had been clean swept away. The veldt was bare, the mealie and corn grounds covered with a rank growth of weeds after lying idle for two or more seasons, the roads and drifts in many cases almost impassable from neglect to repair, only these long thin lines of blockhouses, each manned by a handful of British soldiers, and each joined by an entanglement of barbed wire; and within the squares thus formed a commando

[1] 'Report upon Irrigation in South Africa,' by Mr. W. Willcocks, C.M.G., M.Inst.C.E., p. 1.

or two, almost destitute, carrying about with them the few bare necessities of life which they sometimes managed to scrape together, as they were kept continually moving by the closing in of well-equipped British columns.'[1]

Such was the condition of the country generally at the close of hostilities. Being almost a purely pastoral and agricultural area, perhaps no portion of South Africa suffered more and was thrown back further by the war than the Orange River Colony. But the war had left varying effects in the different districts, as is evident from the reports of the Resident Magistrates on their arrival at the district towns. The majority of these little dorps were insignificant in the extreme, and lent themselves readily to destruction. 'The average up-country town has neither age nor wealth to recommend it. It stands on a barren flat; rectangular streets straggle vaguely into nothingness; lines of puny gum-trees give zest to the broad desolation of the roadways; corrugated iron roofs the majority of one-storied houses; here and there a pretentious stone-faced brick edifice advertises a successful storekeeper.'[2] Bothaville was fired in a few hours; Lindley was literally razed to the ground in a day. 'Boshof had not suffered so severely as other areas.' In the mountainous parts of the Bethlehem district agricultural operations had been continued throughout the war, and many a guerilla returned to find himself richer in seed and stock than when he left to join his commando.[3] But the rest of the eastern and most of the western districts had been swept of

[1] *The Times*, September 28, 1903. 'A country despoiled of everything save the useless wastage of war, ruined towns, burnt homesteads, barbed wire, and blockhouses, disorganized, depopulated, and literally destroyed, presents almost insuperable difficulties in the repatriation of its whole people' (*Northern Whig*, October 19, 1903).

[2] 'A Subaltern's Letters to his Wife,' p. 161.

[3] 'Certain parts of the district were practically denuded of everything, but in others farm work was carried on right through the war, and crops were sown and reaped as regularly as if no war existed. I could mention half a dozen farms near this town on which good crops of wheat, oats, and mealies were reaped in 1900 and 1901. In the threshing season I have seen the smoke from engines driving threshing machinery and portable mills quite close to towns then garrisoned, and along the blockhouse line it was quite a common sight' (Bethlehem Report).

every living thing.[1] The country round Heilbron was described as a 'tenantless waste.' The town of Frankfort was 'completely smashed up, and there were only eight houses in the whole district with walls still standing.' In Fouriesburg 'not a single house was left entire.' Around Vredefort[2] there were 'no living creatures to be seen anywhere.' In the Senekal district 'what the British troops left undone the commandos completed.' The south-eastern districts were a 'barren wilderness,' and the south-western little better; mile after mile of desolate veldt, where the blockhouses were the only complete buildings. In the few cases where the homesteads had not been levelled they were roofless, and shapeless gaps showed where windows and doors had once been, for the woodwork had been used for fuel. The whole of this destruction should not be attributed to the combatants; a considerable amount of loot and theft undoubtedly took place after the conclusion of peace, for the loose ideas of property acquired during the war were not easily discarded.

[1] 'It must not be supposed, however, that all was plain sailing for the officials despatched to these outlying and hitherto unoccupied districts. On the contrary, the condition of things which they discovered on arrival at their posts was deplorable in the extreme. The public buildings of all kinds, even if still standing, were in the majority of cases entirely gutted as regards their furniture and fittings. The churches were for the most part in a similar condition, while the private dwellings and stores were generally roofless, windowless, and empty. Transport was almost non-existent, and telegraphic communications were much impaired, if not actually destroyed' (Sir Hamilton Goold Adams, Cd. 1551, p. 105).

[2] 'On arrival at Vredefort I find the town a complete ruin. The place is a desert. Your board and staff are living on the veldt' (wire from Vredefort, June 21, 1902).

Vrede, July 7, 1902: 'Five houses occupied in town. Remainder full of dead sheep.'

Lindley, July 15, 1902: 'Require tents to serve as stores and for members to sleep in.'

'There was a charming impartiality about the destruction in this dorp. If a Boer house was burned, an English store was looted. If the Communion plate of the small English church was stolen, the Dutch church organ was gutted and the clock removed. The latter building was used as a hospital, the former accommodated the horses of a commando' (Report of Resident Magistrate, Senekal).

'The houses are for the most part built of green bricks—*i.e.*, bricks that are moulded and sun-dried. When these are exposed to the forces of Nature they soon moulder, so that the elements completed what the army had begun' (Vredefort Report, extract).

From a repatriation point of view the commandos laid down their arms at the worst possible time of the year. In South Africa 'there is no proper summer and winter, but only a dry season—the seven or eight months when the weather is colder, and a wet season—the four or five months when the sun is highest.' The seasons are not nearly so marked as at home, but, so far as Nature is concerned, June in South Africa corresponds to December in the English calendar.

In the Orange River Colony wheat should not be sown after the middle of July; Kaffir corn is sown in August and September, and reaped in May; mealies and potatoes in November and December, harvested in May; oats in May, to be reaped in December. The wheat season was practically over by the time the surrender was complete. Some four months must elapse before the main food crop of the country—mealies—could be planted, and eight months before it could be gathered. The department was, therefore, called upon to commence its duties in the absolutely dead season, with no prospect of using other than imported food-stuffs for some considerable time. Moreover, the veldt was bare, and forage for animals had to be procured from outside sources.[1]

In extent the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony are little smaller than France and Spain put together. They possess no navigable rivers, and for internal communication depend entirely upon railways.[2] The railway systems of both colonies are comparatively insignificant, and hardly affect the

[1] 'When the Boers surrendered, they surrendered because winter was come. It was not the cold they were afraid of, but starvation. By the end of May there is no longer grazing on the high veldt for horse, mule, or ox. Till the end of September they must be fed' (*Monthly Review*, April, 1903).

[2] 'South Africa has, broadly speaking, no rivers. Rivers are indeed marked on the map—rivers of great length and with many tributaries; but when in travelling during the dry season you come to them, you find either a waterless bed or a mere line of green and perhaps unsavoury pools. . . . There is not a stream (except tidal streams) fit to float anything drawing three feet of water' ('Impressions of South Africa,' by James Bryce, 1898).

'A great river is merely a vague line of green winding into space' ('A Subaltern's Letters to his Wife').



A Ruined Dorp.



The Caledon River near Jammersberg Drift.

larger portion of their vast area at all. The Orange River Colony is practically bisected from south to north by the main line from Cape Town to Johannesburg. Off this main line there are no branches on the west; on the east there are four of from thirty to forty miles in length. The first, from Springfontein to Bethulie, is really part of the East London line; the second runs from Bloemfontein to Thaba N'Chu; the third is from Smaldeel to Winburg; the fourth strikes off at Wolvehoek to Heilbron. A glance at the map will give some idea of the small amount of territory hitherto tapped by the railway; but 'the vast immensities—the immense vastnesses—of the veldt are unrealizable' until one comes to trek over them.

'The railway lines, necessarily in a bad condition at the close of the war, and with all their employés desperately overworked, were at times hopelessly blocked, and the attempt to reconcile the demands of the army, the repatriation departments, and the general public upon railways which were quite unable simultaneously to satisfy the requirements of them all was, for at least two months, one of the most pressing and most harassing of the duties of the Administration.'[1] As the work of repatriation, although carried out by the civil administration, formed practically part of the war expenses, it was not unreasonable to expect that some concession would be made by the railways, not only of the inland, but also of the maritime colonies, in the matter of charges for the conveyance of goods required in connection with it. The following were the terms of the concession granted: Goods, passengers, parcels, and excess luggage were conveyed at half ordinary rates. The minimum charge on goods was 1d. per ton per mile; minimum weight 1 ton, or paying therefor. Live stock and vehicles were charged at ordinary rates. These rates did not include loading and off-loading, which were done by repatriation employés. The goods were carried at owner's risk, and, although losses in transit amounted approximately to 5 per cent., the railway authorities refused to accept any

[1] Cd. 1551.

responsibility for such losses. In the allotment of truckage, no precedence was given to the Repatriation Department, which had to take its chance with the general public.[1] It will be seen, therefore, that this so-called concession was a somewhat doubtful privilege. This was to a large extent, however, discounted in practice by the action of railway staff officers, who displayed a courtesy and forethought which were not too commonly to be found in other departments.

The distances from the railway were not nearly so considerable as in the Transvaal, but with bad transport they were not to be ignored. An ordinary load for an ox-waggon with a good team is 7,000 pounds, and it will travel from 15 to 18 miles a day, with grass plentiful. Under the conditions obtaining when repatriation was started, the weight given may safely be halved, and the distance, consequently, doubled. Fauresmith is 45 miles from its nearest station, Jagersfontein Road ; Hoopstad, 70 miles from Brandfort ; Ficksburg, 60 miles from Winburg; Ladybrand, 60 miles from Sanna's Post.

The Orange River Colony, with an area of 50,100 square miles and 11,772 farms, is divided into twenty-three districts, which vary in extent from Ficksburg, the smallest—735 square miles, 278 farms—to Bloemfontein, the largest—4,393 square miles, 1,378 farms. In each of these districts a Repatriation Commission was appointed in June, 1902, with the exception of Lindley, which was at first treated as part of Bethlehem; Phillipolis, included under Bethulie; and Senekal, which was administered from Winburg. As the capital and seat of Government, Bloemfontein was made the headquarters of the department, and became naturally the centre whence supplies were purchased and distributed according to the requirements of the different localities. The transport and supply depots established at Bloemfontein had their counterparts in each district, those on the railway line serving as main depots for the supply of districts more distant. Thus, Smithfield drew

[1] 'Two-thirds of the available truckage from the coast ports were taken up with the military supplies. The repatriation took their chance of the other third with the ordinary citizen.'

supplies from Bethulie, Lindley from Kroonstad, Frankfort from Heilbron. But two districts on the western side, Jacobsdal and Boshof, drew most of their material from the Kimberley line, and the requirements of the three north-eastern districts—Vrede, Harrismith, and Bethlehem—had to be met from Natal.

It will be seen later that in the initial stages of repatriation the difficulties of transport appeared to be almost insuperable. 'The vast distances,' says the *Northern Whig*, 'which had to be covered in this tremendous task over the roadless veldt; the cumbrous means of transport available, ox-waggons—that slowest, most cumbrous and costly probably in the world; the ravages of disease among the animals; and the fact that not only the family, but the whole appointments of the reconstructed farm had to be transported—these and numberless other obstacles combined to render the work accomplished by the Repatriation Department of equal magnitude to the most sweeping operations of the war itself.'[1]

Months before the conclusion of peace, Lord Milner had realized some of the difficulties which the civil administration would have to face on the close of hostilities. 'Even if the war were to come to an end to-morrow,' he wrote, 'it would not be possible to let the people in the concentration camps go back at once to their former homes. They would starve there.'[2] Before the country districts could be reoccupied much had to be done, not only in the supply of food, but also in the provision of draught animals, ploughs, and seed, in addition to stock and building material. For the articles required there were three main sources of supply. Food-stuffs, vehicles, draught animals, and such building material as was contained in the blockhouses, could be drawn from the military authorities on the spot; breeding cattle, sheep and goats, and seed corn were available in the maritime colonies and in Basutoland; other and additional requirements had to be met by importations from oversea.

[1] *Northern Whig*, October 19, 1903.
[2] Cd. 903.

It has been pointed out that repatriation might reasonably have been regarded as part and parcel of the clearance policy —a sequel to the work of the concentration camps. If the devastation of the colony was intended to lead up to its prompt restoration and resettlement, it would have seemed reasonable to have employed the same personnel and material for both purposes, and to have allowed the destroyers to make good their destruction. The animals and material held by the army were absolutely the only ones available for the work of repatriation, yet a sharp line was drawn between the work of war and peace, and the military stocks were too tightly tied with red tape to be placed at the disposal of the civil authorities. The latter were helpless, for orders had not been placed abroad, and no provision had been made before the cessation of hostilities for the importation of stock and material likely to be required in the task of resettlement. Even had such provision been made, the material and animals ordered could not have been immediately available for the purpose required. They might have been landed at the coast, but they could hardly have been brought up-country in time, for the congestion on the meagre railway system between the exodus of the army and the return of the prisoners and refugees was appalling. The situation was critical. The wheat-sowing season was slipping away. The people had to be moved immediately on to their farms and supplied with draught animals for ploughing and seed to sow, if the period of dependence and privation were not to be continued for another year.

But the military authorities cared for none of these things. Indeed, it was not their business. 'Imbued with the commercial spirit of Lord Kitchener, they drove hard bargains.' They had cornered the market; they were not only the largest, but the sole, holders of the stock most in demand, and they consequently sold charily and at high prices. They determined to retain for their own use their first-class animals and first-class transport. The second and third class they were prepared to disgorge at exorbitant rates.

The question of the prices of animals and material to be

taken over from the army by the Repatriation Departments of the two colonies formed the subject of a somewhat voluminous correspondence between Lord Milner and the Colonial Office. In the first instance, no individual prices were fixed; secondly, when the prices were fixed they were considered unsatisfactory. It was agreed that a lump sum of £1,391,000 should be paid for the various articles to be transferred. But the lump-sum principle was inadequate, for, unless the individual price of each article was known, it was impossible to make deductions for shortages when the full amount of any particular article was not received, or to increase proportionately when more of any article was taken over than the quantity contemplated in settling the lump sum. The more immediate difficulty, however, which arose from ignorance of the exact price to be put upon each particular article, lay in the fact that it was impossible to know what to charge for anything wanted by the burghers. There was a great demand on the part of the burghers to take over a quantity of animals and stock at once, but sales were impossible because the price was unknown. 'If we guess at it,' wrote Lord Milner, 'we may obviously either lose, if we estimate too low, or demand more of the burghers than we ourselves are paying, which is contrary to the whole principle on which we are acting.' For some six weeks the War Office and the Colonial Office haggled over prices: the Repatriation Department could get little; the burgher could purchase nothing.

The lump sum of £1,391,000 was made up as follows:

| | £ |
|---|---|
| 2,500 ox-waggons, at £200 ... ... ... | 500,000 |
| 300 mule-waggons and teams, at £300 ... | 90,000 |
| 14,000 poor oxen, at £10 ... ... ... | 140,000 |
| Blockhouses ... ... ... ... ... | 50,000 |
| Traction-engines ... ... ... ... | 110,000 |
| Maps ... ... ... ... ... ... | 10,000 |
| 4,500 donkeys, at £8 ... ... ... ... | 36,000 |
| 1,200 mule-waggons, at £30 ... ... ... | 36,000 |
| 1,000 Scotch carts, at £12 ... ... ... | 12,000 |
| 200 trolleys, at £10 ... ... ... ... | 2,000 |
| 15,000 mules, at £27 ... ... ... ... | 405,000 |
| | £1,391,000 |

Exception was taken to the prices of poor oxen, mules, and mule-waggons. The condition of the poor oxen was such that very few indeed were worth the £10 asked for them. Many of them died before they could be sold. The burghers had to pay £10 apiece or miss the ploughing season. It was therefore suggested that one half should be taken over at £10, and the other half at £3. Many of the mules were poor, and the price of £27 was therefore altogether too high. Lord Milner stated that he could buy mules in good condition at the coast for £18 10s. apiece, and that he therefore considered his offer of £20 apiece a reasonable one. Mr. Chamberlain very pertinently pointed out that, if mules could be bought for £18 10s. at the coast, it would appear to be advisable to buy more at the coast and less from the military authorities. This suggestion was very sound, but hardly practicable. The railways were blocked, and the great advantage of taking over military animals was that they were on the spot.

The price of a mule-waggon before the war was £40. The waggons taken over could certainly not be put at half the value of new ones, but the civil authorities in South Africa were prepared to offer £25 each. The fact of the matter was that the military had the whip hand, and the civil authorities were bound to take what they could get. Consequently, they ran a great risk of either having to face a considerable deficit or charging the burghers a price ' so excessive as to be regarded as a swindle and an attempt to evade our obligations in respect of the free grant.'

The list given above represents approximately the animals, transport, and building material originally taken over from the military authorities in both colonies. With the Transvaal this volume is not concerned. From the following schedule may be gained some idea of the stock and materials taken over by the Orange River Colony Repatriation Department:

STATEMENT SHOWING STOCK AND STORES PURCHASED FROM THE MILITARY.

| | £ | s. | d. | £ | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11,577 horses ... ... ... | 219,310 | 2 | 0 | | | |
| 6,000 mules ... ... ... | 128,972 | 18 | 4 | | | |
| 11,851 oxen ... ... ... | 118,510 | 0 | 0 | | | |
| 110 donkeys ... ... ... | 880 | 0 | 0 | | | |
| 153 cattle ... ... ... ... | 879 | 15 | 0 | | | |
| 990 waggons ... ... ... | 35,530 | 0 | 0 | | | |
| 77 trolleys ... ... ... ... | 770 | 0 | 0 | | | |
| 265 Scotch carts ... ... ... | 3,180 | 0 | 0 | | | |
| 120 Cape carts ... ... ... | 360 | 0 | 0 | | | |
| 21 water-carts ... ... ... | 315 | 0 | 0 | | | |
| Equipment and gear ... ... | 6,680 | 4 | 6 | | | |
| | | | | 515,387 | 19 | 10 |
| Saddlery, halters, spare waggons, equipment, leather, tents, etc. | 13,025 | 19 | 10 | | | |
| | | | | 13,025 | 19 | 10 |
| Building material, wire fencing, tools, etc. ... ... ... | 3,109 | 9 | 3 | | | |
| | | | | 3,109 | 9 | 3 |
| 2,410,275 pounds meat and vegetable rations and tinned preserved meat ... ... ... | 115,096 | 14 | 8 | | | |
| 159,742 pounds coffee ... ... | 5,098 | 12 | 6 | | | |
| 270,681 pounds sugar ... ... | 2,060 | 17 | 9 | | | |
| 2,943,167 pounds compressed forage ... £19,129 3 11 | | | | | | |
| 6,258,054 pounds hay ... ... 21,502 8 8 | | | | | | |
| 882,852 pounds oat-hay ... 3,146 2 6 | | | | | | |
| 175,258 pounds bran ... ... 688 3 10 | | | | | | |
| | 44,465 | 18 | 11 | | | |
| 6,603,600 pounds oats and mealies | 28,802 | 9 | 9 | | | |
| 2,208,933 pounds flour and biscuits | 24,637 | 1 | 4 | | | |
| 97,011 pounds meal, mealie meal, and oatmeal ... ... ... | 475 | 16 | 0 | | | |
| Sundries ... ... ... ... | 3,730 | 12 | 7 | | | |
| | | | | 224,368 | 3 | 6 |
| 1,500 blockhouses... ... ... | 15,000 | 0 | 0 | | | |
| | | | | 15,000 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | | £770,891 | 12 | 5 |

If the military animals on the spot were diseased and poverty-stricken, the horses transferred to the Repatriation Department a few months later from the military remount

depots in Natal and Cape Colony—chiefly from Mooi River, Port Elizabeth, and Stellenbosch—were most serviceable. Each horse was valued as it was taken over, and the average price worked out at £21 apiece.

The whole question of prices came up for revision later at a meeting held at Pretoria between representatives of the Army and the Repatriation Departments on February 27, 1903. But the prices had originally been fixed, oddly enough, in London, and only two points were raised. Firstly, the deficiency of equipment supplied with the vehicles taken over, and this the army consented to make good. Secondly, the price of the mules. It was pointed out that, had the military authorities been under the necessity of disposing of these mules by public auction within a reasonable time, the price of mules on the market would undoubtedly have rapidly gone down, because the amount of ready-money in the country at the time of purchase by the Civil Government was small, except that in the hands of speculators and dealers, who would certainly have combined to lower prices. Attention was drawn to the fact that casualties from glanders and debility had been particularly heavy among these mules, and reference was again made to the difference between the price of military mules and those imported from oversea. Some 6,000 of the latter of a good class had in the meantime been purchased by the civil authorities at £17 10s. a head. Colonel Birbeck considered that an average price could have been obtained by the army of about £20. Colonel McLaughlin stated that he had disposed of a large number of the military mules at £17 apiece. He found it extremely difficult to get any higher prices, and it was impossible to get a market in the Orange River Colony at as high a figure as £20 for the class of mules which he had received. The arguments advanced by the civil authorities on this occasion were perfectly sound and eminently reasonable. The military had thrown off something of that stubbornness and obstinacy which had characterized their dealings with the Civil Government some months before. Consequently, after a good deal

of discussion, the price of the mules in question was fixed at £17 10s. each.

The wretchedly poverty-stricken condition of the oxen and mules transferred led to considerable difference of opinion between the local transport officers and the commissioners as to classification, and many of the district commissions at first refused to take over. The Resident Magistrate at Vrede stated that out of ninety-two mules taken over from Harrismith forty-two died almost immediately; that these mules were 'hairless, and cold winds and frost killed them.' The animals at Harrismith were described as 'very poor and unfit for use'; at Heilbron, as 'poor and useless.' The Resident Magistrate at Fauresmith reported the arrival of nine waggons from Bloemfontein which had 'left foundered oxen at various farms *en route*,' and he stated that the remainder were 'in a wretched state from poverty and could not move.' In answer to protests from Ladybrand and Bethlehem, the commissions at those places were instructed to take over oxen 'if fit to walk to good grazing, and if they had a fair chance of living until the spring.' It will readily be understood that such animals as these took some months to get into trekking condition; meanwhile, not more than one-third of the number taken over were fit for immediate use. The disposal of these poverty-stricken beasts was left largely to the discretion of the district commissions. In some districts they were herded together in kraals, where they were soon attacked by disease and died off like flies; in others they were distributed in small lots among the farmers, and the mortality among them was comparatively small.[1]

[1] 'The large number of animals, mainly required in the first instance for transport, which we took over from the military were for the most part in the most wretched condition. Hundreds of them died before they had done any work at all; many thousands were useless for several months, and were only gradually resuscitated by the greatest care and at considerable expense' (Lord Milner's Report, Cd. 1551).

Telegram from Heilbron, July 25, 1902: 'Transport officer has instructions to hand over 460 of his poorest oxen. Commissioners estimate that 75 per cent. will die immediately. They are useless except at very low figure—say £3 to £5.'

Reply to above, dated July 28, 1902: 'A. A. G. T. promises that no

The state of the transport animals was equalled by the condition of the vehicles. None of the waggons and carts were complete; many were only fit for firewood; all required repairs. These repairs were carried out by the establishment of workshops in several of the refugee camps, especially at Springfontein, Bloemfontein, Kroonstad, and Heilbron. Employment at a good wage was thus afforded to many whose time had hitherto been wasted, and by dint of hard work they were given a practical opportunity of accelerating the return of the general population.

The food-supplies handed over were mostly from the oldest stocks. After years of exposure to sun and rain, a large percentage was discovered to be unfit for consumption. The biscuits were mouldy, the meat decomposed, the forage musty. The condition of tinned stuff was difficult to detect when taken over in large quantities, and was frequently not discovered until retailed to individual burghers, who naturally resented what they considered an attempt to palm off on them bad food.[1]

But whatever the losses incurred in and the disputes occasioned by the transfer of stock and stores from one Government department to another, it was essential that the farmers should be allowed to have promptly what they wanted, and that the Repatriation Department should sell at the best prices obtainable without appearing extortionate or causing a grievance. Sir Hamilton Goold Adams has pointed out 'that the department was precluded from asking farmers the same monopoly price which it had had to pay to the military

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oxen shall be handed over unless fit to move to good veldt from present farm. Have decided to take over on these terms. Shall no doubt lose percentage, but prices reasonable. Must do best we can, with care and extra hay if necessary.'

[1] *E.g.*, wire from Bethlehem, July 21, 1902: 'Large quantities of meat and biscuits taken over by us in rotten state. Impossible to detect condition of military stores before opening.'

From Kroonstad: 'Owing to the distance which the burghers had to come, it was found necessary to issue them their rations by the month, and in the majority of cases the badness of the meat was not discovered until the man had reached his home, and could not by any means effect an immediate exchange.'

authorities. In many cases it would have been unable to dispose of the stock at all; in other cases where, by the exercise of a virtual monopoly, it might have compelled the farmer to buy from the repatriation depots at inflated prices, the bargain would have left an aftertaste of grievance against the Government, which it was essential to avoid at all costs.'[1]

The action, or rather the attitude, of both the military and the civil authorities to each other in this connection was severely criticised later by the War Stores Commission, as will be seen from the following extracts, which are taken from the report published last August:

'The report of the committee, presided over by Lieutenant-General Sir William Butler, suggested that a simple method of avoiding loss might have been found in handing over to the Repatriation Department "the whole surplus army stock at a joint valuation," and we have accordingly inquired how far this was feasible and how far it was done.

'Both Lord Milner and Lord Kitchener were agreed that it was desirable to hand over to the Civil Government for the purpose of repatriation as much of the surplus army stores as was possible, and Lord Milner did, in fact, take over stores to the total value of £3,521,000. . . . It would have answered no useful purpose if Lord Milner had taken over the whole of the surplus supplies beyond the requirements of the Repatriation Department; moreover, he was limited to £3,000,000 in the first instance, and could not buy in bulk at that time to a greater extent. Lord Milner's view is that they took over in the first instance as much as they could deal with. They had to consider the prospects of the harvest (which eventually turned out badly, so that the Civil Government had to keep a good many people supplied for more than a year), and they also had to consider the extent of their available depots and the number of officials at their service. Many of the supplies also were unsuitable for repatriation requirements. Lord Milner has, in fact, been criticised for taking too much.

[1] Cd. 1551.

'The actual arrangement made between Lord Milner and Lord Kitchener was that the military should give repatriation their prices, and that the latter should have all that they chose to take at those prices, but that both the army and repatriation should be free to sell to or to buy from others if they could get better terms. There was undoubtedly great difficulty in arriving at any sure estimate of the amounts required on either side. Burghers were being brought back from Ceylon, St. Helena, and other places, and the amount of food-supplies varied largely from month to month. On the other hand, the troops were being demobilized and leaving the country, and it was necessary to keep a sufficient supply in hand to feed the varying numbers as troops were from time to time withdrawn. We cannot see that any better arrangement than that arrived at by Lords Milner and Kitchener was feasible; but, at the same time, we think that the two departments were too much disposed to regard themselves as rivals, each trying to get the better of the other in bargaining, rather than as joint administrators for the benefit of the British taxpayer of supplies and money coming from the same source. Between September and December 31, 1902, repatriation were buying oats at 9s. and 9s. 6d. at the coast, which with railage would be 12s. 6d. or 13s. at Pretoria; and in January, 1903, the director of supplies accepted Meyer's tender to buy all surplus sound oats at 11s.' The two departments were in constant communication with each other. The repatriation officers stated, and the military officers to some extent agreed with them, 'that on the conclusion of peace the repatriation demand for forage was enormous, and that they took over all the forage that the army could spare, but that there was not enough, and in consequence they had to go elsewhere, with the result that subsequently, when the garrisons had been reduced and surpluses arose, the Repatriation Department had already made their arrangements for supplies from other sources.

'There appears to have been a tendency on the part of the officers of both departments to try to make bargains and to

raise difficulties rather than to accommodate matters, and there are indications that this developed on the part of the Army Service Corps into a desire to sell to anyone rather than to repatriation. Except in the hay case already described, it has been impossible to ascertain the facts in any given instance with sufficient certainty to fix blame definitely on any individual. It is certainly strange that more dealings did not take place between the two departments, unless there was a reluctance to deal, such as some of the civilian witnesses believed to exist.'[1]

The ways of the War Office are not always clear to the ordinary mind, and its representatives in South Africa at the conclusion of the war in their dealings with the Civil Government seemed, temporarily anyhow, bent on putting every possible obstacle in the way of resettlement. Fortunately there were many exceptions, many officers who realized that military and civil were merely parts of the same administrative machine and who did all in their power to co-operate heartily in what was, after all, a common task. The vast number of animals and amount of stock taken over have been enumerated; the state of the country will not have been forgotten. For the feeding of the animals in question the Repatriation Department had to rely solely in the first instance on the military depots of grain and forage. When the animals were taken over, there was a tacit understanding that supplies might be drawn on repayment from these depots in such quantities and for so long as they might be required. It will be remembered that the railway was practically blocked so far as obtaining supplies from the coast was concerned. Yet no sooner had the military got their surplus animals and transport off their hands than they stopped supplies. Without any warning and without advising the Repatriation Department, a telegram was suddenly despatched from Pretoria that 'no further Army Service Corps supplies of any sort were to be issued to repatriation.' The effect of such an order can be better imagined than described. The

[1] Parliamentary Paper, Cd. 3127.

following reports received from Heilbron and Winburg are merely examples of those received from other districts. The Resident Magistrate, Heilbron, wired : 'Have 1,500 horses and mules to feed, and, on reduced rations, can only hold out five days, not allowing for any sick cattle.' 'If we cannot get hay and oats here,' wrote the Resident Magistrate, Winburg, 'all our animals will starve ; there is no grazing within a radius of twelve miles from the town, and we have only a week's supply on hand.' The result of making strong representations to army headquarters, Pretoria, was that the military authorities consented to continue issuing up to September 15, when the fodder already ordered at the coast was expected to arrive.

Special buyers were in the first instance engaged by both the Transvaal and Orange River Colony Repatriation Departments to purchase live-stock in the Cape Colony and Natal. Unfortunately, no arrangement as to the prices to be offered was made between the two departments. The buyers were usually unknown to each other, and at auction sales frequently bid against one another.[1] The colonial farmer, the moment he got an inkling that Government was buying, raised his prices. The employment of special buyers on commission, so far as the Orange River Colony was concerned, proved anything but a success, and the purchases they made were unsatisfactory. Many of the local commissions objected strongly to the cattle and sheep allotted to them. In the case of Smithfield a commissioner stated that, out of a herd of 350, 80 were useless. The Jacobsdal Commission reported that they could not realize 50 per cent. of the cost price. This dissatisfaction may perhaps be accounted for apart from the bad judgment of the buyers. These cattle and sheep had to be driven for many miles, and it is not impossible that

[1] 'In addition to having to purchase stock for the requirements of the department, stock was also purchased for the Transvaal Land Settlement Board, and practically for the whole of the Government departments, as His Excellency the High Commissioner considered it advisable that there should be only one purchasing party, in order to avoid the various Government departments entering into competition with each other' (Report on Transvaal Repatriation, Cd. 1551). Apparently the Orange River Colony was overlooked !

exchanges were frequently effected *en route*, good being replaced by inferior animals between the place of purchase and the place of distribution. The objection of farmers in many of the country districts was based on pre-war prices, and they did not realize the rise caused by the war until they came to purchase for themselves.[1]

But, whatever its faults or advantages may have been, the employment of special buyers was very soon discontinued, and the local commissions were empowered to purchase on their own, on the understanding that they undertook to recover the cost price, which they usually had little difficulty in doing. In some districts, when stock was not immediately available, the farmers were allowed to purchase elsewhere for themselves, and the District Repatriation Commission honoured the bills. In such cases, armed with a stock pass, which enabled them to travel on the railway, they usually proceeded to Cape Colony. When they had made their purchases and driven their herd or flock into the railway line, they applied to the Central Repatriation Board for trucks, which were granted to them whenever they could be spared. On the whole, the cattle obtained in Basutoland by the department proved the most satisfactory. They were fully acclimatized, free from disease, and in perfect condition.

To deal with and buy imported produce, and to advise on prices to be paid, agents were appointed at the four chief coast ports—namely, Cape Town, East London, Port Elizabeth, and Durban. These agents were paid 2½ per cent. for buying and forwarding, and their charge was 2s. 6d. per ton for forwarding oversea goods. Mules were imported from the Argentine, sheep from Australia, ploughs and building material from the United States.

[1] 'The present system is not at all satisfactory from a practical point of view, because the farmer can, or imagines he can, buy more suitably in Cape Colony for himself' (extract from Report of Resident Magistrate, Winburg, dated August 21, 1902).

'The reason why these people can get sheep at this price is that they go to Afrikanders and farmers in the colony who are in sympathy with them, and these farmers supply them with five, ten, or fifteen head, or more, from their flocks at nominal prices' (Report from Resident Magistrate, Boshof).

## CHAPTER V

### ANIMAL DISEASES AND THEIR TREATMENT

'Diseased nature oftentimes breaks forth
In strange eruptions.'—SHAKESPEARE.

DISEASE and famine are commonly said to be the aftermath of war, and in this respect the war in South Africa proved no exception to the rule. The mere existence of the Repatriation Department precluded the possibility of famine, which was imminent, firstly, on the conclusion of hostilities, and threatened later by a prolonged drought; but animal diseases were not so easily coped with. Nothing hampered so persistently the return of the people to their homes, nothing hindered to such an extent the cultivation of the soil and the restocking of the country, as the prevalence of disease. Among the many difficulties which beset the task of repatriation, animal diseases claim a foremost place. Some of these diseases were indigenous; others were imported during the war; all became rampant after the declaration of peace. In what follows the knowledge of a veterinary surgeon or an agricultural expert will be found wanting, but a modest attempt will, with some diffidence, be made to trace the origin of these diseases, to indicate their bearing on repatriation, and to describe the methods adopted by the department to overcome them.[1]

The Boer methods of stock-raising, not unlike possibly

[1] *Vide* Cd. 963, 1463, 1551, on which the first portion of this chapter is based. The latter half is the result of personal observation, and compiled from the reports of the Repatriation Department veterinary officers and stock inspectors.

those described in the Old Testament, were primitive in the extreme. Quantity rather than quality was their main aim, and their one idea was to increase the number of their animals, with as little trouble and expense as possible to themselves. Consequently, the animals were left very much to their own resources, and promiscuous breeding was the natural result. The animals were kept entirely on the veldt, and no attempt was made to improve the various breeds, either by selection, the introduction of fresh blood from abroad, or by the adoption of enlightened systems of feeding and management.[1] The farms were, with very few exceptions, unfenced, and the animals were herded during the day and confined in foul, unwholesome kraals or yards at night. Skilled veterinary assistance was practically tabooed by the ignorant Boers. They regarded the outbreak of contagious disease, which destroyed immense quantities of stock during the decade preceding the war, as a visitation from Providence not to be interfered with with impunity.[2] The Free State Government did very little for the actual assistance or encouragement of animal husbandry. It is true that it passed an excellent Fencing Act and various other Acts dealing with specific contagious diseases, such as rinderpest, glanders, etc.; but these Acts, though not bad in themselves,

[1] 'The Boer was not an advanced stock-farmer in any sense of the word. He found certain diseases indigenous to the country, which he did not seriously attempt to cope with. He rarely fenced his stock-routes and outspans, or endeavoured to improve the carrying capacity of the land by paddocking. . . . In the quality of his stock he was equally backward. In the Afrikander ox he had the makings of one of the hardiest and strongest draught animals in the world; in the Afrikander pony he had the basis of a wonderful breed of riding horses, to whose merits the late war has sufficiently testified. He never seriously tried to improve either one or the other. Stallions of a wretched quality were allowed to run wild among his mares, and he had no system of culling to raise the quality of his herds. The market for his beef and mutton was small and uncritical, so that the amassing of animals became with him rather the sign visible of prosperity than a serious professional enterprise' ('The African Colony').

[2] 'There can be no doubt that the Boer theory of epidemics as visitations from the Almighty, against which it would be impious to struggle, is largely responsible for the hold these diseases have upon the country' ('The New Era in South Africa,' p. 49).

were very indifferently administered, and it was, of course, their effective administration which was of real importance.

The animals, as might be supposed from the conditions under which they were kept, were hardy and active, but small, and slow in arriving at maturity. Owing to their having been bred for many generations in the country, and to the fact that they were left so much to themselves, they became, by virtue of natural selection or the survival of the fittest, thoroughly acclimatized and admirably adapted to their surroundings. The aim of the Boer in breeding cattle was to procure a supply of trek oxen on the one hand and of heifers on the other. The latter were used for breeding or for selling to Kaffirs, who employed them for the purchase of wives. The sheep were kept chiefly for their wool, which was readily accepted by storekeepers in exchange for stores. No attempt was made to rear either cattle or sheep solely for the production of meat, the Boers regarding this as a matter of secondary importance, and being quite content with the flesh from animals which had served their term as trek oxen or breeding stock, as the case might be.

The effect of the war upon the live-stock of South Africa was most disastrous. The native stock was almost exterminated, and the country was impregnated with disease. And yet the losses among the military animals during the campaign, although excessively heavy, were due rather to service conditions than to disease. General debility and exhaustion, the result of overwork, were rife ; but there was a notable immunity from contagious and ordinary diseases, with the exception of glanders, introduced chiefly by horses and mules purchased in North America and Spain. Isolation and the mallein test enabled the spread of glanders to be prevented. There was exceptional freedom from indigenous disease. For instance, in the siege of Ladysmith, during the horse-sickness season, only one case occurred amongst 16,000 horses and mules of that garrison. The oxen during the war were generally free from disease. Contagious pleuro-pneumonia frequently appeared, but it was stamped out by the destruc-

tion of the affected, and the inoculation of the contaminated, spans, and was never allowed to spread. No cases of rinderpest occurred.

The somewhat remarkable absence of disease among the military trek oxen and cattle during the war must be attributed to the fact that they consisted for the most part of indigenous stock which was well seasoned and thoroughly acclimatized. The comparative freedom from disorders, or at least losses, preserved in the case of imported animals is evidence of the excellent arrangements made for the care of these animals, and the energy and despatch with which the Army Veterinary Department nipped in the bud all contagious outbreaks. It is none the less true, however, that, owing to the exigencies of military operations, vast numbers of imperfectly inspected animals were imported into South Africa from all parts of the globe.[1] Among these, disease, which had with difficulty been kept under control by careful and constant veterinary supervision, was bound to break out so soon as that supervision was relaxed.

The hardy, useful stock bred by the Boers had, then, been wellnigh exterminated, and any thorough restocking of the country would, consequently, have to depend largely upon importations from abroad. But before such importations could with safety or with any reasonable prospect of success be made, it was necessary to clear the country to some extent of existing diseases, and to take every possible precaution against future and probable outbreaks.

The first essential was undoubtedly the organization and maintenance of a strong and thoroughly efficient Veterinary Department. The agricultural future of the whole colony was here at stake, for the so-called Boer farming, outside one or two wheat districts, had been, and was likely to continue, wholly pastoral in character. Beyond the cultivation of a few morgen of mealies, with sometimes an orchard and a

[1] 'But the prevalence of diseases of stock, grave as it always was, has been greatly aggravated by the uncontrolled importation of animals of the most heterogeneous nature, necessitated by military requirements during the war' (Lord Milner, Cd. 1551).

patch of garden, it consisted almost entirely in cattle-grazing. But the Civil Administration, even if it had foreseen the difficulty, which is doubtful, had made, and would make, no immediate provision for dealing with it. Before the close of hostilities, although the services of tobacco, fruit, and forestry experts had been retained, the Orange River Colony Agricultural Department had not established a veterinary branch.[1] At the restoration of peace the Repatriation Department was looked to to grapple single-handed with the whole question of disease. It may reasonably be submitted that this duty properly belonged to the Agricultural Department, and both the wisdom and the justice of foisting it on to a strictly temporary and already overburdened organization are certainly open to question on more grounds than one. Owing to the limited number of animals to be dealt with, an excellent opportunity, and one which was unlikely to recur, was afforded of practically eradicating disease before the introduction of fresh stock.[2] There was every likelihood of this unique opportunity being lost. Just as the army, in its natural anxiety to bring the war to a successful issue, had unwittingly been mainly responsible for the importation of disease, so the Repatriation Department, in its pardonable haste to resettle the population, was likely to induce its spread. A wholesome and timely check was necessary in order that the supply of the country's immediate needs might not endanger its future prospects.

The Repatriation Department, accordingly, added to its various other organizations that of a veterinary staff, which was thoroughly efficient and energetic in every way, but not by any means numerically strong enough to cope satisfactorily with the vast amount of contagious disease. Three veterinary surgeons and two stock inspectors were appointed, who had to keep constantly on the move, travelling from district to

[1] 'I am now taking steps to select a veterinary officer for the colony' (Report of Sir Hamilton Goold Adams, dated March, 1903). This officer was eventually appointed in August, 1903; *vide* Cd. 1551, p. 106, and Cd. 3028, p. 41.

[2] 'It is easier to clean a country while stock is comparatively scarce, and until it is cleaned the importation of large quantities of unsalted animals would be premature' (Lord Milner, Cd. 1551).

district. So much travelling was not only a great loss of time and waste of energy, but it also continually hampered their work. Everyone, however, lent a hand in this most necessary task. Much was done by the transport officers and conductors; much, again, by the district commissioners, who in many cases were fully acquainted with the diseases and knew how to deal with them.[1] Many districts were quite able to take care of themselves, without any skilled assistance from outside; others, again, seemed completely paralyzed as soon as an outbreak occurred.

'Incalculably greater than the sufferings of the men, great as they were, were the sufferings of the horses and mules in the war. . . . Oxen sank down beneath the yoke and were released, to lie until death overtook them; exhausted mules were given another chance of life against great odds; horses that had carried men to victory lay scattered where they had received their death wounds.'[2] The poverty-stricken condition of such animals as survived months of trekking, to be at length handed over, with the army's blessing, to the Repatriation Department, was calculated to arouse mingled feelings of admiration and pity. It rendered them also easy victims to the numerous animal diseases which are more prevalent in South Africa than elsewhere. Their conglomeration in large herds and mobs at the conclusion of peace induced the spread of maladies which might have been avoided by careful separation. Glanders and horse-sickness seized the mules and

[1] *E.g.*, 'Lung-sickness has broken out among our cattle at Phillipolis The commissioners have, therefore, started to inoculate the whole herd' (Bethulie telegram, dated December 1, 1902).

[2] 'A Subaltern's Letters to his Wife,' pp. 45 and 49. Animals frequently suffered also when travelling by rail, both during and after the war.

'While waiting at Vredefort Road I saw a mule train pass through the station. In front of the station was a tank, from which men were drawing water. When the mules saw and smelt the water they raised one universal cry of delight, only to be followed, unfortunately, by an equally universal groan of agony as the poor brutes saw the water for which they were thirsting left behind' (Veterinary Officer's Report, extract).

'It was also difficult, owing to their construction, to feed or water animals in the trucks. Generally speaking, I think the process of feeding and watering in trucks must be more or less unsatisfactory. For long journeys there is nothing for it but to detrain at various stages' (Cd. 963).

horses, lung-sickness and rinderpest the trek oxen and cattle, scab and blue-tongue the sheep.

It was only to be expected that the diseases which were most troublesome, and which were mainly responsible for the severe losses sustained in nearly every depot established throughout the Orange River Colony, should belong to the class of epidemics. Of course, a good many cases of ordinary ailments, particularly colic, different sorts of lameness, eye diseases, etc., were also and even almost daily observed; but they played an unimportant and inconsiderable part in comparison with the contagious diseases already mentioned. Of the latter, glanders proved to be the most important, and to its debit must be placed the majority of the losses amongst the horses and mules.[1] It is common knowledge that the virulent principle of glanders gains a footing most easily among debilitated animals, when they are kept under foul conditions. The action of the department in taking over with the military animals the military kraals, which had been in use during the war, came in, consequently, for a good deal of local criticism.

It is, perhaps, unnecessary to point out that such criticism was not wholly deserved. Glanders possesses this in common with other contagious diseases—that it is never spontaneously developed in the absence of the virulent agent. The bacillus of glanders is not able to live for any considerable time on the hard floor of a kraal which is constantly exposed to a burning sun and dry air, or in mangers made of corrugated iron. An outbreak of glanders cannot be produced by unfavourable external conditions, through overcrowding, overworking, or insufficient food. Spontaneous development does not exist, and there is invariably at the bottom of any outbreak the introduction of a diseased glandered animal. Such animals were introduced and constantly reimported among those taken over from the military authorities.[2]

[1] The loss sustained by the department from glanders alone during the period July to December, 1902, was 1,622 horses and mules, valued at some £34,000.

[2] 'Great trouble was taken at Springfontein in having the kraals ploughed up, and the mangers, water-troughs, fencing, etc., thoroughly

But it is undoubtedly true that some of the kraals should not have been used when they were incompletely furnished. Animals had more chance of keeping healthy if allowed to run on the open veldt. In some of the kraals there were no feeding-roughs; consequently, the animals were fed on the ground surface with oats and hay. In a confined space and ground-fed, the diseased were much more liable to contaminate the healthy, both by their breath and by the virus dropping from their nostrils and farcy ulcers. Contagious disease was observed to spread much more rapidly in the kraals where animals were fed from the ground than in those where mangers and feeding-troughs were supplied, which could be washed, cleansed, and disinfected.

No attempt was, of course, made to treat either acute farcy or glanders in its acute or chronic form, as the disease has hitherto proved incurable, and the danger of the infection being transmitted is always real and imminent.[1] It was too common an occurrence, unhappily, at most depots to see animals suffering from the acute form being led off to be shot and buried. Such animals, with their sunken eye and emaciated body, bare coat and trembling limbs, open sores and soiled nostrils, swollen face and choking cough, with their looks of pain and distress, served to bring home the loathsomeness of this foul disease, and their despatch came as a welcome relief. It was not so easy, however, in the appalling dearth of transport and the exceptional scarcity of draught animals, to part with those suffering from glanders in its chronic form. Such animals were frequently, to all outward appearances, comparatively healthy; they might live for months or even years;

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washed, cleansed, and disinfected, to prevent further animals becoming contaminated. On the arrival of horses from Bowker's Park I found two among them showing positive evidence of glanders; yet all these horses were marked with "M" on shoulder, which denoted, or should have denoted, that they had been tested with mallein. Either they must have escaped detection or come into contact with fresh centres of the disease' (extract from Veterinary Officer's Report).

[1] A native in charge of repatriation horses at Lindley developed symptoms which the district surgeon pronounced to be those of acute glanders.

they were obviously still capable of doing the work which was so sorely needed.

Mallein, which had proved almost infallible during the war, was used for diagnosing the presence of glanders.[1] All horses and mules were subjected to the mallein test, and such as manifested a complete reaction and at the same time showed symptoms, however slight, of the disease, were immediately destroyed. On the other hand, all those animals which reacted typically, but evidenced no symptoms such as nasal discharge, swollen lymphatic glands, ulcers, buds, or marasmus, were spared, but isolated until they gave no reaction after two successive inoculations. Every care was taken that only animals free from disease should be issued to the Boers; and in cases where animals contracted and died from contagious disease within a reasonable time after having been purchased, their value was made good to the purchaser.[2]

The repatriation horses and mules suffered largely from a contagious disease commonly known as pseudo-farcy, which, although found in Cape Colony, was unknown in the Free State before the war. The symptoms of this disease were almost identical with those noticed in the case of farcy. There was a similar formation of cords, buds, and ulcers, with swelling of the neighbouring lymphatic glands. The buds and sores appeared almost everywhere on the body, and usually discharged a yellow or yellowish-white and somewhat viscid liquid. In some cases they were covered with hard crusts, and where the legs were affected the whole limb became frequently much swollen. Although this disease was easily to be confounded with farcy, and in some cases the

[1] 'A grey mare at Smithfield gave no reaction to test, but she was so emaciated that I had her destroyed. A post-mortem showed her lungs to be glandered, although she had exhibited no diagnostic symptoms of the disease' (extract from Veterinary Officer's Report).

[2] In some districts the number of animals—issued before the Veterinary Department was fully organized—which so died was very considerable. 'These certainly amount to over 300 mules and horses and about 20 oxen. In each case the brief evidence of two or more burghers, and if possible that of a member of the South African Constabulary, has been taken, and I have invariably recorded my opinion as to cause of death' (extract from Kroonstad District Report).



The Mallein Test.

lives of horses and mules were sacrificed through failure to distinguish them, the microscope revealed that it was due to some other organism than that of glanders. Not in one single instance did an animal affected with it react under the mallein test, or afterwards develop symptoms of glanders. It was found to be curable. The buds were widely opened, and the sores were well scraped and frequently cauterized, either with drugs or with the hot iron. Such treatment in the case of animals in fair condition was invariably successful, and a complete cure was effected in from one to three months. Where, however, the patient, through neglect, had become emaciated, and recovery promised to occupy six months or more, it was considered more economical to destroy it.

As in the Crimea, so during the South African campaign, mange spread to an alarming extent amongst horses and mules. Although not so deadly in its effects, it was a continual source of embarrassment and worry in the repatriation depots. It was rampant among the animals taken over from the military. They were miserably thin and restless, with parts of their skin depilated, hard and dry like parchment, and laid, particularly about the neck and shoulders, into thick folds and deep wrinkles. There can be no doubt that scabies, which is caused by certain acari living on and even within the skin, hiding in a network of fine galleries, assumed in South Africa a particularly troublesome, not to say formidable, character. This was probably due to the almost incessant heat to which the animal's coat was exposed, and which was, unfortunately, very favourable to the development of the scab insects. Whilst in European countries the pest generally subsides considerably during the winter months, and is then more amenable to treatment, in South Africa it was equally virulent the whole year round.

Mange is extremely contagious, and the constant rubbing, scratching, and biting of the animals affected with it soon served to contaminate manger and litter—in fact, everything around them—with the parasites and their young brood, to the danger of healthy animals. Successful treatment depended

upon systematic and repeated applications of one or more of the ordinary antiseptic drugs, combined, be it added, with a large amount of elbow-grease. Different conductors made use of different drugs. Petroleum, oil of tar or sulphur, sheep-dye, tobacco extract, mixed with various other ingredients, such as linseed-oil, soft-soap, lard-oil, water, etc., were all employed with satisfactory results. Cases of transmission of 'brand-zickte' from horses or mules to their attendants, both black and white, were not infrequent. Fortunately, the scab insects are, as a rule, not long lived on the human body, and quickly disappear.

Many of the horse depots, especially those at Springfontein and Kroonstad and the district of Vredefort, were severely visited by that probably exclusively South African disease known as 'horse-sickness.'[1] It was the so-called 'Dunpaarde-zickte,' which, producing an acute congestion and extensive watery infiltration of the tissue of the lungs, causes suddenly extreme difficulty in breathing, a flow of frothy yellow liquid from the trachea, and rapid collapse. This disease is probably due to a most virulent micro-organism, which has not yet apparently been isolated. Its presence can, however, be easily demonstrated by injecting a small quantity of virulent blood into the hypoderma of an animal liable to contract the disease. The period of inoculation is so short and the evolution of this pest so rapid that the animal experimented upon will in most cases die within a week or ten days after infection.

Horse-sickness resembles human malaria in many respects, and its cradle is frequently found in low-lying localities or along river-beds. Its presence in South Africa may possibly be attributed to climatic conditions, and it is probably spread by means of mosquitoes. In the case of repatriation animals it most frequently attacked horses in good condition. Some recovered if the presence of the disease was recognised early, and before their temperature had reached 105° F., but those

[1] Two varieties of horse-sickness are met with in the Orange River Colony: the ordinary form, and a more deadly form, called by the Boers 'Dik-kop Paardezickte'—*i.e.*, 'the swollen head horse-sickness.'

taken with a higher temperature at the start invariably died.

Infectious cerebro-spinal meningitis was no doubt imported into South Africa with foreign military remounts, and in the larger repatriation depots it did a considerable amount of damage. It consists, briefly, of an acute intoxication, due probably to the presence of specific microbes in the great nerve-centres—the brain and spinal cord, with their coverings. More or less suddenly a number of alarming symptoms are noticed—great mental excitement, convulsive movements of the head, especially the mouth, lips, and tongue, inability to see. Frequently animals entangled themselves in the wire fence of the enclosures, and could only be extricated with the greatest difficulty. A little later they dropped to the ground and died.

Another disease of the great nerve-centres, an acute paralysis, became particularly prevalent amongst the mules of the Kroonstad depot. The animals were unable to rise and stand upright, and usually died within a week after being seized. The mules which succumbed to this malady were mostly imported from the Argentine, where the disease is not unknown.

A few cases of the great European epizootics—influenza and contagious pleurisy—were indeed observed; but they generally took a favourable course, and the loss occasioned by them was infinitesimal.

Happily the two most important cattle pests which worry the South African farmer and which worried the Repatriation Department can be fought against by means of preventive inoculation, and the animals thus treated are rendered immune. Rinderpest and contagious lung-sickness have, consequently, in a large measure lost their terror. These two epidemics were very prevalent in all parts of the Orange River Colony before the war, and were everywhere checked by inoculation. The vast majority of animals taken over from the military authorities and purchased in the Orange River Colony itself had, generally speaking, undergone

immunization. The outbreaks of these diseases were mainly confined, therefore, to animals which had been introduced from outside; but this was not always the case. Experience has shown that animals which have undergone a severe attack of contagious pleuro-pneumonia constitute for a long period—six to twelve months—a grave danger to non-immunized cattle. The Repatriation Department could hardly avoid purchasing unwittingly from dealers within the colony considerable numbers of animals which had contracted the disease during the war, and which had made a more or less complete recovery. It will readily be understood that these were frequently the means of infecting at once those cattle which were not 'salted.' Such infection was traced notably in outbreaks which occurred at Vredefort and Jacobsdal.

It is undoubtedly possible to check successfully an outbreak of contagious lung disease by inoculation. The usual seat of this inoculation is the extremity of the tail, serum collected from a diseased lung being introduced by means of a hypodermic syringe. But whether the disease can be entirely eradicated by this means is as yet open to question, because apparent recoveries may always at some future time contaminate healthy animals if mixed with them. Unscientific as the rifle and poleaxe may be, they were the means adopted to stamp out this pest in England and on the continent of Europe. In view of the uncertainty which at present exists on this subject, not only should the diseased animals be slaughtered, but also those which are known to have come into contact with them. In any case, whether inoculation eventually prove to be an adequate safeguard or not, it is certain that the short quarantine of a few weeks allowed by the Repatriation Department was practically useless in permanently checking the spread of the disease.

'Brandzickte,' or sheep-scab, is a contagious but not necessarily dangerous disease. The actual losses sustained by the department on its account were insignificant, but its treatment entailed a great amount of labour and considerable expense. Ordinary 'brandzickte'—for the Boers employ the

same term both for mange and scab—attacks those parts of the sheep's body which are covered with wool, beginning generally along the back and croup, and extending later to the root of the tail, to the neck, shoulders, and flanks. To relieve somewhat the violent itching, the infected animals rub, scratch, and gnaw their skins, with the result that the fleece becomes fluffy, stained, thin, matted, and torn. As the disease starts with very small papules, its commencement cannot always be easily detected; but there is little difficulty in recognising it after the small spots have become patches, the skin inflamed and crusty, and the wool broken and detached. The tiny parasites are concealed beneath the dried-up serum which forms the scabs, and may be discerned with the naked eye. As the insects are able to live for several weeks in kraals and sheds, in locks of wool, and upon the skins of dead sheep, the disease is not always an easy one to check.

Scab has had a strong hold on South Africa,[1] chiefly on account of the comparative poverty of the sheep; and the Cape Colony Government, in spite of its Scab Act, its inspectors, and its simultaneous dipping, has not yet succeeded in stamping it out. It proved particularly tenacious during the period of repatriation, on account of the exceptional drought; for there is nothing—dipping alone excepted, and even that in many districts was at the time impossible—more antagonistic to its spread than abundance of good grazing. In combating scab, as in the case of other diseases, the Repatriation Department adhered to the ordinary method: the sheep were dipped. But all animals with extensive scabs and hard crusts underwent a preliminary treatment, during which the diseased parts were well scraped, rubbed, and softened. This operation not only smoothed the way for the

[1] 'Hitherto scab has been very prevalent amongst sheep and goats. It is a disease which causes immense loss to flock-owners, and it is one which, by care in the dipping of the animals and in keeping them free from infection, could easily be eradicated. Unfortunately, it has been common for such a long time in South Africa, and the Acts dealing with it have been so badly administered, and so much money has been wasted in connection therewith, that farmers have come to regard it almost as a necessary and unavoidable evil' (Cd. 2482).

antiseptic bath which was to follow, but in itself destroyed an enormous number of parasites by squashing and removing them. It was generally found expedient to use very strong dip, and to always dip twice at least. Tepid water proved to be more efficacious than cold.

The foregoing were the principal diseases which almost paralyzed the Orange River Colony Repatriation Department at the commencement, and which continued for many months to hamper the work of resettlement. It is to be feared that the difficulties in this connection experienced by the sister organization in the Transvaal were no less serious, if the troops of glandered mules examined by our veterinary officers on their way to the north may be taken as any criterion.[1]

The debilitated state of the animals transferred from the military depots has been already indicated, and it has been pointed out that their exhausted condition rendered them peculiarly susceptible to diseases of all kinds. When they were taken over it was mid-winter. The country was a desert, not only so far as man, but also so far as nature, was concerned. The Resident Magistrate at Fauresmith wrote: 'This is the worst season of the year for grazing.' 'We are entirely dependent,' said the Resident Magistrate at Vrede, 'on the veldt growing, and we can get no grazing for animals until it does.'

Moreover, the little winter veldt available in an ordinary season lay blackened for hundreds of miles, as may be seen from the reports of various districts. 'All the veldt between Vredefort, Parijs, the Rhenoster, and the Vaal is practically destroyed by fire.' The country round Heilbron 'for many miles lies charred and black from the great grass fires following the "drives." All the grazing round Lindley is burnt.'

To the inadequate accommodation provided for its animals by the Repatriation Department, and to overcrowding in the first instance, were largely due the numerous outbreaks of

[1] 'The transport has also suffered from several outbreaks of virulent diseases—notably glanders among the mules and red-water and rinderpest among the oxen—the effects of which were aggravated by the difficulty of procuring an adequate veterinary staff' (Report on Transvaal Repatriation, Cd. 1551, p. 30).

contagious and other diseases which immediately followed the transfer. Although there was considerable delay in handing over on account of haggling over prices, this transfer was effected before any suitable arrangements had been made for the reception of the animals to be delivered. Sites had not been selected, water laid on, or kraals built. A veterinary staff had not been organized; transport officers had not been appointed; no conductors and 'boys' had been engaged. Under these circumstances, the animals had to be temporarily placed in such unfurnished wire enclosures as the military authorities could conveniently spare. In an incredibly short space of time germs were here sown of diseases which later took months to check.

The complete isolation of suspects and the segregation of impoverished animals, together with the adoption of strictly sanitary precautions, were among the immediate essentials required if the spread of disease was to be curbed, and if animals were to be brought within anything like a reasonable period to a healthy and workable condition. Insidious in their growth as many of the diseases already outlined were, they took no long time to establish themselves under such favourable conditions as were in this instance allowed, and they had secured a firm hold before the situation was fully realized. The department had not foreseen the difficulty, and seldom, perhaps, has a lack of foresight been so severely visited. Yet it must be pointed out that no grazing was available, that labour was difficult to obtain, and that material was not to be found outside the stores in the hands of the Army Ordnance Department. The erection of suitable accommodation was indeed no lengthy undertaking, and the transfer of the military animals should undoubtedly have been postponed until such accommodation had been provided. At the time, however, the cry of 'Back to the land!' was sufficiently urgent to drown all others, and to it every other consideration had to give way.

The paralytic effect wrought by disease upon the work of repatriation can probably be better imagined than described.

It lent to that work an element of uncertainty which was not always appreciated. It was tantalizing to a degree, because it invariably sprang up where least expected, and seemed to delight in upsetting at the critical moment the most carefully-thought-out arrangements. It was particularly whimsical, and seemed callous of everything except its mission of annoyance and destruction. Its favourite sphere of operations was undoubtedly in the animal ranks of the Repatriation Department, which had accorded it so hearty a welcome. Without fear or favour, however, it bestowed its benefits on all alike. Under circumstances which have already been described it had succeeded in getting a fair start, and that start it managed for some time to maintain. Its pursuers were at first ill supplied with the medical equipment required, and the necessary drugs for its destruction. Moreover, no sooner had an officer begun to deliver his attack upon the parasites of one district than he was summoned to perform a similar operation in another; in fact, it sometimes seemed as if the war had recommenced, but the objective had changed from the elusive Boer to the more elusive microbe. The tactics of the microbe were not unlike those of the Boer. No sooner had he been driven from the main depots than he sprang up in the districts, and, after evacuating the latter, he reappeared on the farms.

It is perhaps unnecessary to trace in detail the ravages made by disease and the inconvenience and disorder which it caused. It rapidly entangled nearly every district, and only very gradually were its coils loosened. Its history is peculiarly monotonous, because, although its varied symptoms may have afforded a scientific study of no small interest and importance, its effect was invariably the same. The district reports for many months were merely repetitions of the same story—plans frustrated, hopes blighted, schemes defeated, supplies scarce, transport disorganized, ploughing impossible. All these difficulties—and there were others—must be placed to the debit of disease. Repatriation was frequently a thankless task; disease made it appear at times a hopeless one.

The tale is not entertaining, and a few instances culled haphazard must suffice. In September, 1902, rinderpest broke out at Lindley and Heilbron, glanders at Winburg and Smithfield, lung-sickness at Vredefort and Boshof. The experiences of the Bethlehem Commission are typical of many other districts. On August 8, 1902, they wired: 'Is it not possible for us to have ten or more mule waggons, as oxen are very weak and work of repatriation is practically at a standstill?' On August 14: 'Have sent two members to take over ten mule waggons at Harrismith. They report that out of ten spans only three fit to do any work. Mules in such poor condition are absolutely useless. May we refuse to take unsuitable animals?' On August 25 they reported: 'Glanders broken out amongst mules.' In his report for October the Resident Magistrate stated: 'The ten spans of mules taken over in August are still as much of a "white elephant" as ever. They are still dying from mange and glanders. They are, and have been, useless except as a means of consuming fodder.' Along the whole of the southern border, in the districts of Rouxville, Smithfield, Bethulie, and Fauresmith, ox had been replaced by mule transport on account of rinderpest in the Cape Colony.[1] No sooner had this been done than glanders attacked the mules. On September 3, 1902, the chairman of the Smithfield Commission reported an outbreak of glanders in his district, and added: 'As remaining mules are segregated, everything is at a standstill.' Mange was rampant everywhere, and in some districts became formidable. The Resident Magistrate at Vredefort reported for October: 'Out of 150 mules originally received I have only 105 left. Of these 48 are in trekking condition. The remainder are suffering so severely from mange that they are absolutely unfit for even the lightest work.'

The following report of a stock inspector on repatriation

[1] 'Agricultural Department, Cape Town, objects to ox transport being used to remove refugees from Aliwal North Camp. I am, therefore, arranging to rail thirty waggons and spans of mules from Kroonstad to Springfontein for Smithfield and Rouxville' (telegram No. B. 1421 to Resident Magistrate, Bethulie).

animals at Kroonstad, dated September 9, 1902, is quoted merely as a specimen. From it may be gained some idea of the trouble caused and the measures adopted to deal with it; for in this case, as in most others, every endeavour was made to carry out the suggestions put forward.

'Please receive following report on live stock at this centre:

'Horses, 569, at remount depot. These animals are in very fair condition, but they are infected with glanders. Three of them were shot by order of veterinary surgeon in charge on 4th inst. All suspects are isolated. They are also very badly infected with mange, and for this disease no dressing is on hand. A large quantity should be forwarded immediately. They are paddocked near township, and are getting a full allowance of feed. I would suggest that every animal be thoroughly and uniformly dressed. When they have been dressed, they should be placed in a new paddock, and the old paddock, with all its paraphernalia, should be thoroughly disinfected. It would be still better if, instead of being kraaled after dressing, they could be given a clean run on some farm. They are, of course, unsaleable at present, and the chance of working out either disease is remote where animals are confined in a limited space. At least three complete dressings will be necessary, and a change of run after each. This course would minimize likelihood of disease spreading, and the expense of feeding would be reduced. The present staff would, I think, be sufficient for new arrangement.

'Horses, 600, at Botha's Farm, near township. These animals are now looking very well indeed, and their condition constitutes a strong argument in favour of plan suggested. There is, however, mange amongst them, and they should therefore be subjected to a similar course of treatment. There is some green grass round here among the veldt. This is capable of keeping animals which are not working in fair condition until the "brandts," or burnt patches, are sufficiently strong for use.

'Mules, 400. Of these, 81 are paddocked near horses at

remount depot, and used for local transport. They are mainly in fair working condition. The balance, 319, are kept on lines near refugee camp, and are also used for local work. They are badly infected with mange. The needs of the district are so great that these animals cannot be spared. The wisest course would be to place them on farms, but such a course is at present impracticable. Clean kraals should, however, be erected, the old ones disinfected, and a method of treatment followed similar to that recommended for the horses.

'Mules, 351, at Naudie's Farm, eighteen miles from township. These animals are too poor for work, and are dying from glanders. The losses number 39 since August 29. They are very mangy, and are being dressed. Suspects are isolated, and the nostrils of all disinfected to prevent spread. In other respects they are gradually improving, and have good grazing and water.

'Transport oxen, 350, at Jordaan's Farm, near township. These animals are being used for local transport. They are very poor, and fit only for light duty. Mange is very much in evidence; otherwise they are healthy. No necessity exists for inoculation. Surroundings are healthful, and grazing is satisfactory.

'Transport oxen, 230, at Latigan's Farm, near township. These are a duplicate of foregoing. They have mange amongst them, and are being dressed. Grazing is good. Inoculation is unnecessary. These two herds should be fed when worked.

'Transport oxen, 421, at Mrs. Botha's farm, near township. These oxen are in a terribly low condition, and mange is very pronounced. They are dying by twos and threes daily, and if a spell of cold rain should come, the mortality amongst them will be much greater. They are otherwise healthy. The grazing is excellent, the surroundings healthy, and management satisfactory.

'*Remarks.*—Owing to the genial rain which has now fallen in this neighbourhood, the growth of green grass should not

be long delayed. A couple of weeks will make a great deal of difference in all kinds of stock if they are sent to graze on good runs.'

This report—and it is but one of many—serves to emphasize repeatedly the dangers of keeping large numbers of debilitated animals in a confined space, and wisely insists on segregation. One instance, the only one available in this connection, will now be given of the success of segregation, on the necessity of which so much stress has previously been laid.

Two districts only, and those two of the richest in the colony, succeeded in escaping the ravages of disease which played such havoc elsewhere. These were Ficksburg and Ladybrand. The immunity of the latter, to which, be it stated, no horses or mules from the original military lot were issued, although favoured by local conditions, must be mainly attributed to the wise foresight of the district commissioners. The Ladybrand District Board had to deal in one way and another with 4,550 oxen. Of these, some 2,000 were taken over locally from the military authorities in the pitiable condition which was so generally characteristic of all the animals transferred. The danger of an outbreak of disease among such animals was immediately recognised, and they were distributed without delay, in lots of six or eight, to all the poorer farmers in the district. Although a few died from poverty and from inability to walk to good veldt, no losses from disease occurred. Each farmer or bijwoner carefully tended the little herd allotted to him, because he was promised the use of the oxen as soon as they had sufficiently recovered to be fit for work. Moreover, he was guaranteed the option of purchase should they turn out satisfactorily, and should he wish to buy. Roughly, one half of these oxen were disposed of to the farmers to whom they had originally been allotted. The remainder were, eighteen months later, recalled and sold. Although taken over in a most wretched state under exceptionally adverse circumstances, they met the immediate needs of the farmers concerned, and subsequently proved a source of profit to the department.



Repatriation Cattle.

Towards the close of 1902 the general situation improved. Disease continued, indeed, to hamper the work of the department until the end; but its outbreaks gradually became less frequent and less deadly, as the veterinary officers and stock inspectors got thoroughly on to their work, and the transport officers and conductors adopted the necessary precautions. The animals were by degrees more and more distributed. As the winter passed away and the early rains improved the veldt, grazing became comparatively plentiful, and both mules and oxen began to mend. Their condition was still far from satisfactory, but they were more or less workable, and could with less risk be sold to farmers who had long been anxious to buy. Moreover, the military authorities, having first wisely got rid of their worst animals, presently consented to part with better ones, and each lot taken over improved in quality. In the case of these later consignments the department played the part of a middleman without profits, and they were quickly bought up by the Boers. Disease, then, although by no means eradicated, had been in some degree curbed, and the question of restocking the country had next to be considered.

The necessity and advisability of importing animals from abroad for this purpose was never questioned in principle, because, as already pointed out, the indigenous stock had been almost exterminated, and what few remained demanded the introduction of new blood if the breed was to be improved, and if it was ever to reach a satisfactory standard.

It was evident, however, that the country had not been cleared of disease, and that the importation of live-stock would be attended with considerable risks. The records of previous importations on an extremely limited scale had been mainly chronicles of disaster, and great care and caution were required if a repetition of these was to be avoided. There were few data to go upon, and it was impossible to forecast with any degree of certainty what breeds of stock, other than native breeds, were likely to be successful.

It is true that the Transvaal Repatriation Department had already decided to take what was more or less a leap in the

dark. Following up a trial shipment of 500 Texan cattle, that department had arranged for the purchase of 5,000 two-year old heifers from Denver, in the United States, and for larger numbers of live-stock to be imported from Madagascar, Texas, Queensland, and the Argentine. But the circumstances of the two colonies were somewhat different. While the Transvaal could claim a larger number of diseases than the Orange River Colony—and prominent among these was red-water[1]—an efficient department to deal with these diseases had already been organized at Pretoria. The Transvaal Agricultural Department was formed in May, 1902, and by the following August twenty-five assistant veterinary surgeons had been engaged, and one or more of these officers appointed to each magisterial district.[2] Attention has already been called to the somewhat unusual lethargy of the Orange River Colony Government in connection with animal diseases. The Orange River Colony Agricultural Department was not established until the latter part of the calendar year 1903, and had no proper organization until the beginning of the financial year 1904.[3] The resources of the Orange River Colony Repatriation Department had already been severely taxed in dealing not only with the legacy of disease left by the war among its own animals, but also in performing to the best of its ability the veterinary duties of the whole colony. It was felt, therefore, although the demand on the part of the more progressive farmers for well-bred animals of every description was extremely keen, that, until disease had been got more thoroughly under control and local conditions were better understood, the importation of live-stock should only be undertaken on a very limited scale.

[1] 'Now, gentlemen, could any greater calamity have befallen this colony than that the Rhodesian red-water fever should have got a footing inside it? It would be a calamity so great that one scarcely dare contemplate it. Yet I say without hesitation that the instrument which has saved the Orange River Colony from Rhodesian red-water fever has been the South African Constabulary' (extract from Lord Selborne's Speech, Cd. 3028).

[2] Cd. 1551, p. 121.

[3] Cd. 3028, p. 40.

The desire of the Repatriation Department to launch out was not unnatural. It was best acquainted with the requirements of the various districts in this respect; it was looking to the future welfare of the country. It already possessed not only the machinery for internal distribution, but also, in the establishment of its coast agencies and railway depots, the mechanical means by which importations could be effected with least chance of loss in transit. Since the termination of hostilities every effort had been made not only to purchase stock for the poorer farmers, but also to assist landowners, who were in a position to do so, to bring stock into the colony. The demand, however, for stock of all kinds was still greatly in excess of the supply, and it was anticipated that this demand would increase in intensity in proportion as the military receipts and the claims for compensation for war losses were paid. The dangers attendant on importations by the Government, to which reference has been made, were in a still greater degree to be feared if importations were entirely left to private enterprise. There was a risk to be run, and it was reasonably argued that the Government could better afford to run this risk than the individual. In the case of the individual, the question of sea transport and railway transit was one of extreme difficulty. A middle course was possible. The Repatriation Department might find out their requirements from individuals, and undertake to import animals by the shipload as required, the applicants agreeing to defray expenses, which would be less for a large consignment than for a number of small ones. Moreover, the Government, by arrangement with the Governments of countries whence the importations were to be made, could insure nothing but the class of animal required being despatched, and could, in addition to preventing private speculation of a least desirable type, vastly improve the stock of the colony by prohibiting the introduction of any but first-quality animals.

There was here a question of general policy which obviously admitted of strong arguments on both sides. It was decided—whether rightly or wrongly time alone will show—that the

Repatriation Department should not embark to any large extent on the importation of foreign live-stock. 'The greater adaptability of private enterprise,' said Sir Hamilton Goold Adams, 'the inability of Government to risk great losses, the already overwhelming calls on the capital of Government, are considerations that in my opinion outweigh the advantages which might accrue were Government able to control the qualities of the stock imported and the prices charged to the farmers.'[1]

The mules imported by the Repatriation Department proved satisfactory and serviceable, but the cattle and rams introduced from oversea were not altogether a success, and were regarded with some suspicion by the excessively conservative Boer farmer with whom the department had generally to deal. 'I was hoping,' said the Resident Magistrate at Vredefort, 'to improve the breed of stock in this district by the importation of fresh blood. The Argentine cattle received from the Central Board were submitted to the farmers for purchase. They did not take kindly to them. They prefer colonial stock.' The department confined itself in the main to the acquisition of large quantities of cattle in Cape Colony and Basutoland, and devoted itself particularly to the purchase within South Africa of sheep and goats which were less liable to disease and capable of rendering quicker returns.

[1] Cd. 1551, p. 49.

## CHAPTER VI

### BACK TO THE LAND

'A genuine history of the South African War, just as it has to begin long before the Kruger ultimatum, will have to go far beyond the Vereeniging Conference, and will tell of the greatest effort ever made to restore a country devastated by war.'—*Bristol Times and Mirror.*

The actual work of repatriation, properly so called, fell under three headings. The first object was to get the people back to their farms as soon as possible; the second, to give them sufficient rations to feed themselves until such time as they should be able to reap their crops; the third, to provide them with the seeds, implements, and animals necessary to enable them to cultivate and grow their own crops. But before the department could engage in the task for which it had been especially constituted, it was called upon to carry out a considerable amount of preparatory work on behalf of both the administration generally and the whole population.

It is somewhat difficult to convey any adequate idea of what repatriation in the first instance really meant and of the colossal task which the department was in its initial stages called upon to undertake.[1] Formed theoretically to minister to the needs of the Boers alone, its field of operation extended in practice to the whole country, to every department of life and to every class of the community.[2] That this should be

[1] 'People who dwell at home at ease can hardly estimate the immense amount of reconstructive work which was required to be done as soon as peace was established' (*Contemporary Review*, November, 1903).

[2] 'It may incidentally be remarked that, although Article X. laid down the broad principles on which the work of repatriation should be conducted,

the case was temporarily inevitable. The monopoly hitherto possessed by the military had been transferred to the Repatriation Department. However defective the transport, stocks, and stores taken over may have been for the purpose required, they were the only ones available; they were the sole means by which life on the veldt could be resumed and the administrative machine restarted. The general term repatriation includes, therefore, an infinite variety of subjects, and some attempt, however inadequate, must be made to deal with these subjects separately rather than in strictly chronological sequence, although they all fall within, roughly, the half-year which immediately followed the declaration of peace.

'The terms of surrender were signed at Pretoria on May 31, 1902, but the Civil Government could not really begin to take over the administration of the new colonies, and especially the country districts, for nearly a month after that date. At Lord Kitchener's request no attempt was made to enter into possession of those districts until after the surrender of the commandos; and though that surrender was accomplished with extraordinary celerity and smoothness, something like three weeks elapsed before any civil officer could even set out for the house or tent—generally a tent—allotted to him in the wilderness which we were about to take over, devoid as it was of crops, of stock, of population, and to a large extent of habitable dwellings.'[1]

Not only had a country been laid waste, but a Government had been swept away, and political, social, and economic life shattered to its foundations. It is true that a skeleton administration had been set up before the cessation of hostilities, but that administration, necessarily hampered and limited in its activity by the restrictions inseparable from war, could

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it was found to be desirable in the interests of the colony to extend the operations of the newly-formed department over a field never contemplated by the signatories to the Articles of Surrender' (Sir Hamilton Goold Adams, Cd. 1551).

[1] Cd. 1551.

not enter upon the task of reconstruction until after the conclusion of peace.[1] Of the huge work of reconstruction, which is still in progress, repatriation was but an infinitesimal and strictly temporary portion. The department, however, possessed an importance outside the actual purpose for which it had been formed, because, in the first instance, it supplied the mechanical means by which the machinery of local government could be restarted. Secondly, the work to be undertaken was important from a political point of view as the first act of the new régime, the first instalment, as it were, of British administration; and the impression gained from this commencement was likely to determine to no inconsiderable extent the attitude of the conquered people towards their new Government.

The majority of the Free State commandos handed in their arms to General Elliot, and by June 21 the surrender was complete. But already the pinch of hunger had made itself felt among the women and children who had been playing hide-and-seek with the commandos, and who had clung to these commandos until the end.[2] On June 10, 1902, Commandant Mentz reported a number of families on the veldt in the Heilbron district 'in a destitute and starving condition.' On the same date General Elliot wired that his 'one anxiety was the situation of the families on the veldt, who had no food and no transport to take them into supply centres.' General Louis Botha at Tweekoppies asked that a supply of rations and blankets might be forwarded for burghers and their families in the surrounding district who were 'in

[1] 'A number of the country districts were absolutely closed to civil administration, while in those where our officials were established their efforts were confined, except in a few favoured localities, to the district towns, and an area, now contracting and now expanding, of a few square miles around each of them' (Sir Hamilton Goold Adams, Cd. 1551).

[2] 'Strange as it may seem, many of the women and children managed to evade the troops and remained in the veldt until peace was declared. As soon as it was known that the Government would provide rations for the inhabitants, these people came from all quarters to receive the meat and flour taken over by the department from the military. They stated that they had undergone terrible hardships. They were half-naked and very hungry' (extract from Lindley Report).

extreme want.' General William Knox at Kroonstad stated that, at the earnest request of the Veld-Kornets on the east of the line, he had sent out 'ten days' rations for about 1,200 adults and 1,100 children who were starving, and whose condition was described as "deplorable" by officers on the spot.'

To meet this immediate need all general officers commanding were instructed to assist in rationing these people to the best of their ability, pending the organization of the District Repatriation Boards. Fortunately no deaths from starvation occurred, and in a few days these families were admitted to the refugee camps.

The surrender of the enemy was more universal, more rapid, and more satisfactory in every way than had generally been anticipated; its completion was immediately followed by an enormous influx of refugees. It will be remembered that outside the concentration camps, and in addition to those distributed over the adjoining colonies, there were many thousands of the country population both in the garrisoned towns of the Orange River Colony and on the outskirts of what had until recently been the theatre of war. Instead of availing themselves of the free accommodation afforded by the camps, these people had originally elected to retain their independence in a spirit which cannot be too strongly commended. They had suffered hardships and privations unknown among those who were fed and housed at Government expense, and, often with very slender resources, had had to pass a long and dreary time, hoping against hope that they would shortly be able to return to their homes and to resume their life's work. With a courage characteristic of their earlier attitude they were determined to get back immediately at all costs, and it was impossible not to sympathize with their very pardonable impatience to do so.

It will readily be understood, however, that the country was not in a fit state to receive them. Their resources were in many cases exhausted, and they arrived unfurnished with sufficient supplies. As the Repatriation Commissions had not yet got

to work, there was every likelihood of their starving.[1] The district boards, consequently, found it necessary to check temporarily the work for which they had been constituted, and had it not been for the timely assistance rendered at this critical moment by the South African Constabulary there would probably have been many cases of starvation. Ficksburg was unable to cope immediately with the influx of destitute families from Basutoland. In the neighbourhood of Reddersburg people were reported to be returning 'too hurriedly,' and much distress prevailed in consequence. The first act of the Smithfield Commission was 'to close by telegram as far as possible all points of ingress.' The Resident Magistrate at Fauresmith wired: 'I am trying to stop further returns of burghers unable to support themselves until I am in a position to insure their not being in want of food.' So serious did the question of food in the first stage of reoccupation become, that no permits to travel to the districts were granted until the Repatriation Boards concerned had been consulted.

The general release of prisoners of war from camps in South Africa was ordered on June 20, 1902. These men gave little difficulty; they all readily took the oath of allegiance, and were apparently prepared to accept the new order of things. But reports from all the oversea prisoner-of-war camps showed that the Boers were extremely sceptical as to the terms of surrender, and were not to be convinced even by telegrams sent by their own generals. On July 30 the Governor of Ceylon wired that the prisoners were 'still obstinate and sceptical.' Moreover, there was practically a universal refusal to take the oath of allegiance. Consequently, the first ship—s.s. *Canada*—sent on June 11 to bring back Boer prisoners from St. Helena, where upwards of 5,000 were interned, only found 278 ready to embark.

The classification of prisoners of war in order of return was

[1] Buck of all kinds were plentiful enough, but the population had, of course, been disarmed. One of the first applications from the Frankfort district was for 'drag-nets to catch fish in the Wilge River, to enable burghers to support themselves.'

based, firstly, on political considerations; and, secondly, on the state of the new colonies and the preparedness or otherwise of the civil administration to accommodate them. This classification was not in every case strictly adhered to, but its general outlines were as follows: Politically there were three classes, and they were allowed to return in the order named: (1) 'Those who had volunteered for active service, and were considered likely to become loyal subjects and useful settlers, and those who appeared willing to accept the new order of things cheerfully; (2) those who had shown no particular bias; (3) irreconcilables and men who had given trouble in the camps.'[1] The bijwoners were of necessity left till near the end, for they were men with no homes of their own and no means of subsistence, and they could not resume their normal life until the proprietary farmers were back on their farms. Similarly, married men were noted for earlier return than the unmarried ones. The wives and families of married men were in most cases living in burgher camps, and the return of the head of the family caused no additional strain on the resources of the refugee camp department and no additional tents were required; whereas in the case of unmarried men extra accommodation had to be provided, and when the man was able to leave the camp to return to his home he did not relieve the pressure like the married man by taking with him a number of women and children from the camp.[2] Further, no shipload was allowed to include more than 100 men for any one district.

A fortnight before embarkation a nominal roll of those returning was furnished to the Repatriation Department, giving the district and farm to which each prisoner belonged. Rebels were handed over to be dealt with by the Governments of the Cape Colony and Natal. The camps at Umbilo, in Natal, and Simonstown, in Cape Colony, were used as rest camps. Prisoners on disembarking at Durban or Cape Town

[1] Cd. 1551, p. 23. 'Feeling between the different sections in the camps ran very high—so much so, that to avoid faction fights it was found necessary to classify prisoners according to their political opinions' ('The New Era in South Africa,' p. 18).

[2] Cd. 1551, p. 18.

were sent for three or four days to these camps, where they were supplied, if necessary, with blankets and clothes before being entrained for their respective colonies. They usually arrived in drafts of from 400 to 500, and were accommodated in special trains, consisting of third-class carriages. No military escort was placed on the train, but they were accompanied by an interpreter, who looked after their wants and saw that they reached their proper destinations. Rations, consisting of meat, bread, sugar, and coffee, were supplied for the journey. The cost of each prisoner to the railway-station nearest his home was considered a charge on military funds.

On arrival in their districts, the ex-prisoners who were able to look after and support themselves were allowed to go whither they pleased, but were expected to report their advent to the local Resident Magistrate. Those who had families in the camps went to the camps and reported themselves there. They might then at once, if able to support themselves, quit the camp, taking their families or dependent relations with them; or they might remain in camp, if unable to support themselves, till the Repatriation Department was in a position to provide for their return to their homes.

With the exception of 900 odd so-called 'irreconcilables,'[1] of whom 500 persisted in refusing to come back until January, 1904, the return of the ex-prisoners of war was practically completed in six months. By the end of 1902, 10,000 out of some 12,000 had returned to the Orange River Colony. The scheme of return worked admirably, and this may be attributed as much to the docility and obedience of the men themselves as to the excellence of the arrangements made. 'All this was accomplished,' says Lord Milner, 'as far as I am aware, without a hitch, and without so much as a single unpleasant incident occurring after the prisoners had once landed in South Africa.'[2]

[1] 'While declining to declare allegiance to Great Britain, they stand out for conveyance back to their homes untrammelled by any pledges. Their attitude is such that it is difficult to resist the conclusion that they find their present situation and treatment too agreeable to induce a desire for change' (*Bombay Gazette*, December 19, 1903).

[2] Cd. 1551, p. 2.

PRISONERS OF WAR RETURNED TO ORANGE RIVER COLONY UP TO DECEMBER 31, 1902.

| Date. | From— | Vessel. | No. | Remarks. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1902. | | | | |
| June 25 ... | Simonstown | — | 601 | |
| ,, 25 ... | Bloemfontein | — | 413 | |
| ,, 30 ... | Cape Colony | — | 55 | Prisoners of war on parole. |
| ,, 30 ... | St. Helena | *Canada* | 237 | |
| July 2 ... | Germiston | — | 1 | |
| ,, 5 ... | India | ? | 191 | |
| ,, 21 ... | St. Helena | *Guelph* | 19 | |
| ,, 28 ... | ,, | *Guelph* | 18 | |
| ,, 30 ... | ,, | *Ataka* | 3 | |
| Aug. 5 ... | Portugal | *Bavarian* | 16 | |
| ,, 12 ... | Bermuda | *Walmer Castle* | 158 | |
| ,, 12 ... | ,, | *City of Vienna* | 446 | |
| ,, 14 ... | St. Helena and Portugal | — | 15 | |
| ,, 15 ... | Umbilo | — | 140 | |
| ,, 16 ... | India | *Golconda* | 133 | |
| ,, 21 ... | ,, | *Englishman* | 278 | |
| ,, 21 ... | St. Helena | *Canada* | 449 | |
| ,, 24 ... | India (Solon and Dagshai) | — | 6 | |
| ,, 25 ... | St. Helena | *Avondale Castle* | 1 | |
| ,, 25 ... | ,, | *Tagus* | 361 | |
| ,, 25 ... | Bermuda | *Tartar Prince* | 48 | |
| ,, 29 ... | India | *Paletina* | 45 | |
| ,, 30 ... | Bermuda | *Roslin Castle* | 145 | |
| ,, 30 ... | (Garleeh) | *Garlech* | 1 | |
| Sept. 1 ... | India | *Burgomeister* | 2 | |
| ,, 4 ... | Ceylon | — | 28 | |
| ,, ? ... | Bermuda | *Kildonan Castle* | 1 | |
| ,, 4 ... | Cape Town | — | 134 | |
| ,, 9 ... | Bermuda | *Kron Prinz* | 1 | |
| ,, 11 ... | ,, | *City of Vienna* | 289 | |
| ,, 2 ... | India | *Nervassa* | 30 | At own expense through Lorenzo Marquez |
| ,, 12 ... | Ceylon | *Safari* and *Vita* (October 14) | 8 | At own expense through Lorenzo Marquez |
| ,, 13 ... | India | *Koenig* | 12 | |
| ,, 13 ... | St. Helena | *Malta* | 416 | |
| ,, 18 ... | Bermuda | *Staffordshire* | 413 | |
| ,, 23 ... | India | *Ionian* | 511 | |
| ,, 23 ... | Bermuda | *Donnelly Castle* | 1 | |

PRISONERS OF WAR RETURNED TO ORANGE RIVER COLONY UP TO DECEMBER 31, 1902 (*continued*).

| Date. | From— | Vessel. | No. | Remarks. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Oct. 21 ... | St. Helena | *Orotava* | 352 | |
| ,, 31 ... | Bermuda | *Aurania* | 455 | |
| Nov. 1 ... | St. Helena | *Golconda* | 55 | |
| ,, 4 ... | India | *Sultana* | 1 | |
| ,, 5 ... | Ceylon | *Burgomeister* | 2 | |
| ,, 11 ... | Ceylon | *Lake Manitoba* | 747 | |
| ,, 13 ... | India | *Ionian* | 488 | |
| ,, 19 ... | Bermuda | *Sunda* | 87 | |
| ,, 30 ... | India | *Orotava* | 483 | |
| Dec. 2 ... | ,, | *Montrose* | 425 | |
| ,, 24 ... | Ceylon | *Ortona* | 730 | |
| ,, 29 ... | India | *Aurania* | 380 | |
| | | Total ... ... | 9,831 | |

The first essential and the most pressing need for the reoccupation of the outlying towns and the country districts was transport. The Repatriation Department was, consequently, called upon to supply transport for every conceivable purpose. 'It was used by every Government department and every Government official.'[1] Lord Milner stated that he travelled nearly 2,000 miles in the two colonies to see the actual progress of repatriation work on the spot. His tour embraced a considerable portion of the Orange River Colony, and over this portion he and his staff were conveyed in repatriation transport. From the High Commissioner downwards the Repatriation Department had to provide for one and all. The individual's estimate of the value of the department not infrequently depended upon the class of transport with which he was furnished, and it is to be feared that in many cases the estimate so formed was not a very high one. Resident Magistrates travelled to their districts, medical officers and postal officials to their posts, schoolmasters and schoolmistresses to their schools, landowners to their farms, settlers to their holdings, bijwoners to their squatting grounds, natives

[1] *The Times*, September 28, 1903.

to their kraals—in vehicles provided by the Repatriation Department. And in the majority of cases all these people were accompanied not only by a vast amount of personal kit, but also by a varied collection of household appointments and domestic utensils. So far as transport to their homes in the first instance was concerned, no distinction was drawn between Briton and Boer, rich and poor, white or native. The very widest interpretation was put upon the phrase 'assisting the restoration of the people to their homes,' contained in Article X. of the Terms of Vereeniging. It will, therefore, be understood that the statistics to be given later, although roughly approximate, by no means fully represent the whole of the work carried out in this connection. Eventually the army itself hired transport from the department for the manœuvres of 1903.

Similarly the Repatriation Department was called upon also in the early stages of reoccupation to feed practically the whole of the population in many districts. In the general chaos wrought by the war both stores and hotels had been demolished. At the conclusion of peace the majority of the storekeepers, even if they managed to return themselves, were unable immediately to get their stocks up-country.[1] Consequently, even people with ready cash—and ready cash was none too plentiful—were unable to purchase food. In many cases rich landowners applied for rations and, when reminded of their wealth and social position, replied very pertinently that gold was indigestible, and that they could not 'eat their farms.' They were allowed to draw rations on repayment.

It was not the intention of the Central Board to hamper local trade or to interfere in any way with the storekeepers. With this object in view, rations for those unable to help themselves had originally been limited to flour and meat. For the welfare of the general community the return of

[1] There were exceptions. 'The ways of the Jew are past all finding out. Refuse to grant him a permit for himself and goods, and he says nothing; but he is in occupation months before the Gentile, unless that Gentile comes from Aberdeen' ('The African Colony,' p. 99).

merchants and the replenishment of their stores was as imperative as the return of the farming population. In fact, the storekeepers were afforded every inducement to get back in order that, by supplying the wants of the farmers and others, they might lighten the labours of the district commissions. But the establishment of the repatriation depots acted as a wholesome check on the growth of exorbitant prices, which the storekeepers at first were inclined to charge. This was especially the case at Bethlehem and Boshof, but Lindley will serve as a typical instance of the action taken by the department in this connection.

The town of Lindley had been completely destroyed. On the return of the civil administration no stocks existed except those held by the military, which were taken over by the Repatriation Department. Accordingly, the Resident Magistrate was instructed to sell and to issue extra rations until the stores opened. On the return of the storekeepers they were allowed to purchase from the department groceries and luxuries, and the issue of extra rations was discontinued. Later, the Lindley storekeepers, like those in other districts, were afforded special facilities for getting up supplies. For some months, however, the storekeepers required to be carefully watched, and the moment they attempted to retail flour and other necessaries of life at excessive rates, the district commissions entered into competition in order to protect the general public.[1] This

[1] 'As was to be expected, the price of flour and Boer meal at once rose when we stopped selling. It would undoubtedly assist the farmers greatly if we could obtain an extra supply to be sold for cash at a reasonable figure. The lowest quotation for mealies we have been able to obtain is 30s. 9d. delivered at Harrismith. The price is high, but seeing that as soon as our stock ran out the local prices rose at once from 25s. to 32s. 6d. per muid, it appears to be absolutely necessary to get a further supply, not only on account of the quantity which we ourselves sell, but because it enables us to keep the price fairly reasonable' (extract from Bethlehem Report).

'The policy of keeping on a supply of food-stuffs for issue for cash has amply justified itself. The ring of storekeepers has been broken, and now they are cutting prices against each other. Flour can now be bought in the stores at 18s. 6d. per 100 pounds, and mealies at 22s. 6d., a reduction of 40 per cent. on the prices ruling before our last stocks arrived' (Report, dated July, 1903).

course proved to be fair and beneficial to all concerned. There was no attempt to deprive the storekeeper of his legitimate profit, or to intermeddle with fair trading, as is evidenced by the fact that no complaints from traders were received.

Some account of the organization of the Repatriation Department, as originally laid down, has been already given; but there was always a tacit understanding that, if any modifications should later prove to be necessary in the interests of the community, such modifications would be made. Constant development and change were the essential characteristics of a department founded on inexperience to deal with a situation unprecedented in history. Red-tape, consequently, was conspicuous by its absence. 'My principle has been,' wrote Lord Milner, 'while exercising a general supervision over the whole field, to leave a great latitude to the two Colonial Governments, and they, in their turn, have wisely accorded a large discretion to their local commissions.'[1] The broad lines of the repatriation scheme were identical in both colonies, but the organization of the Orange River Colony Department differed almost entirely from that established in the Transvaal. It was obvious from the first that, desirable as uniformity might be, the scheme could not be carried through satisfactorily on any cut-and-dried plan. Just as the central organizations in the two colonies differed from each other, so in a less degree did the plan adopted by one local commission deviate from that carried out by its neighbour.

The Central Board at Bloemfontein worked on the principle that each district commission knew best the conditions and requirements of its particular district.[2] Accordingly, a wise

[1] Cd. 1551.

[2] 'From the first anything in the nature of a cut-and-dried scheme that might diminish the elasticity of the relations between the Central and District Boards was purposely avoided. As a rule, however, the Central Board reserves to itself all the larger questions on which uniformity is desirable, such as the purchase of stock, stores, etc., advances on mortgage or promissory notes exceeding a certain sum (in the one case £400, in the other £150). In the actual details of administration the local commissions are allowed considerable latitude' (Sir Hamilton Goold Adams' Report, Cd. 1551).

elasticity was allowed in administration, for the treatment accorded to one district was frequently found to be totally inapplicable to another. In some instances the large discretionary powers granted to the local authorities were abused: laxity in work and the absence of proper supervision led to robbery and corruption; in one or two cases repatriation officials eventually found themselves in gaol.[1] Scandals were inseparable from so great a task and the haste with which it had to be performed. It would have been singular if no black sheep had been found among the enormous staff employed.

Generally, however, the district commissioners realized the responsibility of their arduous duties, and faithfully performed them. While the Britisher was, as a rule, the organizer, the Dutchman, imbued with a strict sense of justice, brought his vast experience and invaluable local knowledge to bear upon the matter in hand. The Englishman was, perhaps, generally inclined to give too freely and too ready to pity; the Dutchman, on the other hand, with a lower standard of material comfort, more fully acquainted with local conditions and the true character of his poorer fellow-countrymen, was ever on the look out for undeserving cases. The two nationalities, therefore, acted as a wholesome and a seasonable check on each other in the administration of a fund which, ill spent, might have tended to pauperize rather than to benefit the recipients.[2]

In all the department's dealings the welfare and convenience of the population to be resettled were the first consideration, and everything was sacrificed to this object. However in-

[1] Defalcations amounted to £2,002 15s. 5d. There were five cases of prosecution for theft, fraud and misappropriation, and in four of these convictions were obtained, the offenders being sentenced to terms of imprisonment with hard labour varying in duration from six months to three years.

[2] 'Here English and Dutch worked together with a combination of advantages not easily matched. Money no object is itself a worker of miracles. This and energy and organizing resource was the British contribution, while the Dutch brought that skill in settling down and building up which in two generations or less made a hardy little State of a few hundred trekkers' (*Pilot*, October 24, 1903).

adequately it may have been fulfilled, this was the primary aim which the department strove to keep constantly in view.

On the one hand, administration was not allowed to be hampered by a necessarily intricate system of accounting; on the other, administrative details were invariably modified to suit the diversity of local conditions. A mutual confidence existed between the public and the department and between headquarters and the district boards. While every individual knew that any complaint of unfair treatment would not be ignored at headquarters, the local commissions were aware that no action would be taken on any case within their jurisdiction until they had been consulted. This was merely the application on a small scale of the principle of backing up the man on the spot. Complaints were few and far between, except those made in the seditious, ill-informed, scurrilous local press by anonymous writers, who could not be identified when required to substantiate their remarks. In the vast majority of districts the local commissions possessed the confidence of the inhabitants, and they were loyal to the central organization. Friction there was from time to time, and correspondence frequently aided instead of checking its growth; but a safety-valve was always found, either in a visit by one of the commissioners to Bloemfontein or in the frequent tours of inspection undertaken by the Secretary and Assistant Secretary to the Central Board.

'Savoir tout c'est tout pardonner.' But this was not so at the start. Although it was a time of strenuous effort on the part of all concerned, little progress was at first made. The military and the civil authorities haggled over prices, and the transfer of draught animals and transport vehicles was delayed. Both, when the transfer had been effected, were discovered to be in a most deplorable condition. The animals were poverty-stricken and diseased; the vehicles were badly out of repair; the trek-gear was in pieces and the harness incomplete.

At Bloemfontein itself and at the main depots on the railway—namely, Springfontein, Kroonstad, and Heilbron



The Central Remount Depot at Bloemfontein.

—sites were chosen, kraals were erected and stores were built. Workshops were set up in the refugee camps at these places, and the inmates were engaged to repair the carts and waggons and to mend the harness and trek-gear. At Heilbron this portion of the work was more simple than at other places. 'The commission,' wrote its chairman in a later report, 'succeeded to the remount depot, laid out with great care by the military, comprising five large sheds, each 100 feet long, with paddocks, forage store, and several loose runs. These were filled with horses taken over on the spot, or brought from Harrismith and Stellenbosch. The waggon park, transport depot, and mule kraals adjoined. A harness-maker's shop was started in a large marquee near, where the harness taken over from the Army Service Corps by weight was made into serviceable sets, and the forge was converted into a shop for waggon repairs, workmen for both coming from the refugee camp. In the centre of the town good offices were secured, and a large wool-store was hired for the great quantities of meal and meat, seed, grain, and building material to be dispensed.'

Buyers for the purchase of breeding cattle were despatched to Cape Colony; orders for implements, building material, and seed were placed in the maritime colonies and in England and America, and tenders were invited from local merchants. The various appointments at headquarters were gradually filled up, the accounts department organized, and the district commissions appointed. To the Secretary and Assistant Secretary fell the whole of the executive work. They were advised by the Central Board, and referred all matters of importance to the Lieutenant-Governor.

It will possibly be realized, however, that the organization rapidly brought into being at places on the railway was not so simple a task in connection with the districts off the line. In the case of the latter the commissioners were frequently as widely scattered as the population with which they had to deal. 'Of the four members of the commission,' wrote the chairman of the Smithfield Board, 'only one was at hand.

The remaining three had to be collected: one from the prisoner-of-war camp at Green Point, after many wires on the question of his identity; one from Matatiele, in East Griqualand, a journey of a hundred miles over country covered with snow, which had broken down telegraphic communication and stopped traffic; and the third from a refugee camp.' When the commissioners managed to reach the railhead they were delayed for lack of transport. Thus the Fauresmith Commission was detained for some three weeks at Jagersfontein Road, the Rouxville Commission at Aliwal North, and the Vrede Commission at Standerton. July was far advanced, and with it the wheat-sowing season, before all the commissions had reached their districts.[1]

Sufficient has probably already been said to indicate the difficulties of transport. During the period under consideration transport and food were the main essentials. It was mid-winter. The veldt was bare and contained nothing wherewith life could be maintained in the animals. Consequently, forage had to be taken for both the outward journey and return. The daily ration for oxen was 6 pounds of hay; that of mules 8 pounds of hay and 6 pounds of grain, or its equivalent. For this purpose 1 pound of bran is equivalent to 1 pound of oats or mealies, and 10 pounds of hay equals 6 pounds of compressed forage.

There were ox-waggons, drawn by sixteen oxen, and mule-waggons, drawn by ten mules. Each waggon required two natives, and a white conductor was placed in charge of each section of a few waggons. The ordinary full load for an ox-waggon is 7,000 pounds, for a mule-waggon 5,000 pounds. Not only had families to be transported, but all their belongings, together with household appointments, tents, and rations. Under all these circumstances, one waggon could seldom take more than one family.

[1] 'It was not until the month of August that it was found possible to undertake the return of the people to their homes on any organized basis. In the interval much had still to be done before the commissioners could feel satisfied that the work once started would continue without interruption. Modifications in the general policy of assistance to meet the special



Repatriation Waggons on Trek.



De Uitspan.

With the meagre transport available—for two-thirds of the animals were at this time either segregated on account of disease or too poor for even light duty—the department had more than it could do to cope with the demands for food on the part of burghers who had managed to get back independently to their homes. Only gradually could outlying depots be established and filled up with supplies, and not until this had been done could a commencement be made with the depletion of the refugee camps and the actual work of repatriating the burgher and his family.

'A start could not be made,' wrote the chairman of the Fauresmith Commission, 'before the end of July, until transport could be provided, and then the work went very slowly at first, owing to the distance from the railway-line of most of the people brought back. Stores had also to be conveyed a distance of thirty-five miles from the railway-line before distribution could be attempted, and this duty alone kept many of the waggons occupied which were originally intended for the conveyance of people and their chattels. The majority of the former inhabitants of the district were living in the concentration camps at Orange River Station, Norval's Pont, and Bethulie, although many had been sent to Kimberley, Uitenhage, and Kabusie. Comparatively little difficulty was experienced in taking back to their homes the people living to the east and south of Fauresmith, the distance in no case exceeding thirty-five miles; but in regard to the former inhabitants of the Ward Middenveld and the portion of the district lying to the west and south-west of Fauresmith, the distance from the railway was so great that a fortnight was usually occupied in taking one family home and returning to the railway-line. It therefore became necessary to make

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requirements of the district had to be decided upon and sanctioned from headquarters, and the number of applications for return which every post poured in had to be considered each on its own merits. Provisions and grain in bulk had to be brought in and stored, grazing hired for cattle and sheep which were now arriving under conductors and natives, and waggon trains fitted out to bring in families and maintain supplies for a constantly increasing population' (extract from Smithfield Report).

special arrangements for repatriating these people, and a further supply of both mule and ox waggons was applied for. On the arrival of these waggons after some weeks, it was decided by the district commission to utilize two-thirds of the transport in conveying people from the western line to their homes, and the remaining third was found sufficient for the work on the eastern side of the district. No sooner were these arrangements made, however, than, owing to the outbreak of rinderpest in some of the northern districts of Cape Colony, the Orange River was closed to ox traffic, and it became necessary to employ mules in conveying people from Cape Colony across the river. A depot was, consequently, established on the farm Roodepoort, about twelve miles from Orange River Station, and mule-waggons were employed to bring people from the refugee camps to Roodepoort, which became a distributing centre, whence people were conveyed to their homes by ox-waggon.'[1]

The foregoing extract has been quoted to exemplify some of the difficulties of local transport. The following may serve to show how scattered was the population of many districts: 'The refugees of the Smithfield district were located mainly in the following camps: Aliwal North, Norval's Pont, Uitenhage, Kabusie, in the Cape Colony; Bethulie, Springfontein, Bloemfontein, and Brandfort, in the Orange River Colony. There were a certain number of families in Natal. The greater portion were in the camps in the Cape Colony and in the Bethulie camp. It was consequently decided to run the waggon convoys to both Aliwal North and Bethulie, making the latter the base of supplies.'[2]

Considerable difficulty was experienced in obtaining the services of leaders and drivers for the waggons, although the wages offered were not to be despised. Both leaders and drivers were given full rations, consisting of meat, flour, sugar, and coffee, and in addition to free food, the former were paid 1s. and the latter 2s. per diem. The natives previously

[1] Fauresmith Report, extract.
[2] Smithfield Report, extract.

employed with the army were nominally taken over with the military transport. But in military service they had received wages three times higher than they had ever known in their lives before. They had, according to their standard of living, grown rich and independent. The majority had saved enough to be able to retire for good; all were sufficiently flush with cash to take a holiday, and to satisfy an impulsive and fickle desire for change, which is one of their main characteristics. Unaccustomed, in the first instance, to regular work, they had already been retained by the military authorities considerably over the time of their original engagement. Inured to the excitement and havoc of war, there was little to attract these natives in the humdrum work of reconstruction, and the wage offered was not sufficient to deter them from the visit to their kraals which they had long projected.[1] They consequently refused to re-engage, and departed to their homes.

An attempt was made to replace them with the poorest bijwoners and their sons from the refugee camps. These men were known to possess an almost instinctive knowledge of animals and practical transport matters, which it would probably be hard to beat in any part of the world. It was thought that they would welcome an opportunity of congenial employment at a fair wage, and that they would be only too ready to aid in the task of resettling their own people. The majority, however, showed a strong disinclination to work; the few engaged proved most unsatisfactory. They neglected their animals, wasted time on the road, and at the end of the journey demanded increased wages, additional rations, and in some cases boots and clothing. Complaints on this subject were received from Boshof, Fauresmith, Heilbron, Hoopstad, and Ladybrand, and both at headquarters and in the districts mentioned the transport service was frequently disorganized for

[1] 'They are attached to their homes, and even when they go away to labour centres to earn money, prefer in general to do so for short periods, and then to return to look after the interests of the family and the welfare of the stock, participate in the sociable joys of beer gatherings, and superintend the ploughing for the coming year' (extract from Report of South African Native Affairs Commission).

lack of men to work it. Eventually native drivers and vorloopers were obtained from the Native Refugee Camp Department.

The lack of local transport, in the first instance, rendered the distribution of food next to impossible. The repatriation transport was bad; the Boers had no vehicles at all. The farmers could not get into the depots to get their food away, and the local commissions could not send it out to them. Rations were, therefore, drawn by proxy, and the few individuals who managed to get hold of animals independently and to manufacture some sort of conveyance were allowed to take out food for their neighbours. 'It was a sad sight,' wrote the Resident Magistrate at Lindley, 'to see most of these arrivals coming in on foot and with strange vehicles. They were badly clad, and some had patches of sheep-skin worked on their clothes. Most of them were in a deplorable condition. Some had plough-wheels to which was fixed a box; others sheets of corrugated iron tied on wheels; and others, again, a kind of sledge made of odd pieces of wood.'[1] 'With regard to the supply of rations to outlying farms,' stated a Smithfield report, 'all arrangements had been made, in case the necessity arose, to establish district ration posts. But it was pointed out to applicants that, where possible, groups of adjacent farms should club together, and with the one vehicle at their command draw their rations simultaneously. By this method, and with the aid of pack-ponies, no difficulty whatever was experienced in keeping up supplies to farms lying in some cases thirty miles away. One of the first carts to arrive was curious in construction. Its pole was a tree-trunk, its seat an empty biscuit-box, whilst each wheel was made up of several old wheels of various types fastened with wire. There was not much style about this conveyance, but it served its purpose.'

Care was taken that the difficulties experienced in the case of independent refugees should not be allowed to recur in connection with the return of the inmates of the concentration camps. The regulations drawn up for the depletion of these

[1] Lindley Report, extract.



The Arrival of Repatriation Stores at a District Town.



The Drive in for Rations.

camps were, roughly, the following: As soon as the surrender was complete, families who desired to do so were allowed to move out of camp if they had the necessary transport. Families whose male relatives were prisoners of war were not allowed to leave camp pending the return of such relatives unless the camp superintendent was satisfied that they were able to protect themselves, and the district Repatriation Commission concerned was of opinion that they could make some commencement with the restoration of their homes.[1] Families who, owing to the death or the disappearance of their male relatives, were not, in the opinion of the superintendent, capable of making an effective commencement, and for whom no other provision could for the time be made, remained in camp until those who had moved out had been provided for.

A careful record of all people leaving camp for their homes was kept, showing number and name of farm, and district and ward in which it was situated. On his departure the head of each family was given a chit, signed by the camp superintendent, containing his name, the names of the members of his family and his white dependents, and the date up to which they had been rationed. This chit was presented on arrival to the local Repatriation Commission, who, after considering fully the requirements of each applicant, issued an order on the district depot for such food-stuffs and other articles as were available. From what has been already said it will be understood that the commissions could rarely in the first instance supply all that was required. Their initial issues were in the majority of cases confined to food-stuffs.

[1] 'The general rule adopted was to send out those women who were able to produce some adult male relation or friend able and willing to supervise their resettlement on the farms and to give them assistance in ploughing. In some cases, however, these women were unable to give the required guarantee, but were anxious to get back to their homes before the season was over. Their importunity and the difficulty of providing for them elsewhere induced the commission to comply with their requests, and it has been found that, as a rule, the decision was a wise one. The Boer farmer's wife has proved herself capable of much hard work out of doors, and possessed of much resourcefulness and energy, and in nearly every case was as much farm work done as if the husband had accompanied his family' (extract from Bloemfontein District Report).

For the actual transport of the people to their homes, the burgher camps formed the base of operations. In June, 1902, there were, in addition to the largest at Bloemfontein, nine of these camps in the Orange River Colony, in the neighbourhood of the following places: Bethulie, Norval's Pont, Springfontein, Brandfort, Winburg, Kroonstad, Vredefort Road, Heilbron, Harrismith. The six camps in Cape Colony were Kimberley, Orange River, Aliwal North, Uitenhage, East London, Kabusie. The inmates of any one camp did not necessarily belong to the vicinity in which it was situated. In the Orange River Colony itself transfers from one camp to another had been going on for some months, in order that, at the cessation of hostilities, all the people might be collected in the camps nearest to their homes; but those in camp in the Cape Colony could not be allowed to return at once, owing to lack of accommodation.

During hostilities these camps had provided a home for those who, through the exigencies of war, had been rendered homeless. On the conclusion of peace they became a temporary resting-place for the last to surrender and the returning prisoners of war. But these tranquil backwaters to the surging torrent of war, these harbours of refuge and havens of peace from all the horrors and sorrows of conflict, now suddenly became hives of activity.[1] Day by day, and all day long, for many weeks clouds of dust were seen to rise as the long spans of oxen and mules, dragging waggon after waggon, laden with food, tents, and a strange assortment of domestic articles, crawled snakelike out of the canvas town on to the illimitable veldt, wending their way to some distant farmstead. The loading has not been so easy a task as might be supposed. The conductor knows that his waggons are not of the best, and his animals none of the strongest. He cannot contemplate with equanimity a break-down on the open veldt. The camp superintendent, ever mindful of the welfare of his

[1] 'It is a pity that some of our cavilling English critics could not have spent a morning in one of these busy camps' (*St. James's Budget*, June 26, 1903).

protégés, insists upon the absolute necessity of taking the whole of the first equipment—the first month's rations, bedding, and a tent against the restoration of the homestead. But the old 'vrouw' has a host of broken furniture, in addition to the food-stuffs she has managed to save from liberal camp rations. Her man has his curios, collected or manufactured during his imprisonment oversea. The children are loath to leave behind their books and toys, for which they have acquired a taste in the camp school. There have been hot debates as to essentials and non-essentials.

But eventually, by hook or by crook, and by dint of much rearranging, room has been found for all. The stodgy, expressionless, sallow-complexioned, but withal hospitable and kindly, women crawl, not without difficulty and danger of upsetting, to the top of the motley pile, and at length a start is made. The crack of the long whip and the familiar shouts of the native driver as he urges forward his cattle ring out clearly on the sunlit air.

It is not with unmixed feelings that the women quit the camp which they had originally so dreaded and later abused. Friendships have sprung up, and they have acquired a liking for society, which the lonesome veldt does not afford. For the children the trek home is merely another episode in the transition to which they have by this time grown accustomed. They had been playing at war; they were now going to play at peace. But they, too, feel parting with their playmates, who will not be easily replaced.

The trouble and anxiety which the uncertain future may have in store are, however, for the moment forgotten. The women-folk and children, joyous at the prospect of return, prattle gaily; the Boer draws his pipe, and ponders silently 'on the mysteries of Providence and the odd chances of life.' In happy ignorance of the desert to be traversed and the ruin awaiting them at their journey's end, their first feeling is one of relief at being free from the restraints attendant on war and the discipline inseparable from camp life.

Unhappily, their hardships were not yet over, and much sorrow and tribulation had still to be endured. The first attempt to restart life was destined to fail, and many set-backs were to follow the initial endeavour.

The ordinary comparatively well-to-do families were with little difficulty induced to quit the camps when their turn came, although, so soon as the state of the country became generally known, they did not manifest that desperate haste which some of the camp critics had anticipated.[1] The poorer bijwoner families, however, showed no inclination 'to leave an idle life of free rations in order to rough it on the veldt.' This was not unnatural, and it is to be feared that camp superintendents were not always at first particularly drastic in their endeavours to close down the camps. Great difficulty was experienced in emptying the Heilbron camp. 'I wish to inform the Central Board,' wrote the Resident Magistrate at Fauresmith, 'that there are a number of families in the Springfontein and Kimberley camps who refuse to leave those camps for their homes in this district.' Nor was the return from camp to veldt invariably appreciated by the more rational and intelligent Dutch children. 'It is so very hard to understand,' wrote a young girl to her former teacher, 'why I should have been so completely checked in the course of my studies just when it was all growing so immensely interesting.'[2] In many cases, happily, the break was strictly temporary, for the poorer families were drafted to the relief work camps, in which schools were established long before the district schools had been reorganized.

Families on leaving the refugee camps were furnished with a month's rations, a tent for each family, and any absolutely necessary articles of clothing and bedding, in addition to domestic utensils. It might have been supposed that the cost of this first equipment would be met from military funds,

[1] 'At first the desire to be free in the "outside places," as they called them, brought the people out of camp with a great rush; but it died away as the severe conditions of life were realized, and many preferred their unheroic ease and the society of tents' (extract from Report).

[2] 'The Brunt of the War,' p. 302.

as it was an advantage to the military authorities to get these people out as fast as possible, since their maintenance in the camps was a military charge. There was, apparently, a verbal agreement to this effect between Lord Milner and Lord Kitchener; but as no written record of this agreement was taken at the time, the military authorities subsequently refused to strike off the issues made in this connection, and they were paid for by the Repatriation Department.

When the first month's supply was exhausted, further rations were issued by the district Repatriation Boards. The repatriation ration—intended, presumably, to favour the survival of the physically fittest—was not nearly so elaborate as that to which the burgher families had grown accustomed in the concentration camps, nor could it bear comparison with that served out by the sister organization in the Transvaal.[1] It consisted, strictly speaking, of one pound of meal, flour, or biscuit, and one pound of tinned meat daily for each adult; to children under twelve years of age were issued half rations. These rations were drawn usually for one month at a time; more frequent issues would have compelled the recipients to undertake long journeys, and called them away from their farmwork. In the majority of districts the ration originally laid down was subsequently supplemented by the issue of ½ ounce of coffee and 2 ounces of sugar per head per diem. Children were in the first instance given condensed milk, and this was replaced by fresh milk as soon as milch cows could be procured.[2] All the necessitous sick were considered to be a charge on repatriation funds. Consequently,

[1] 'Transvaal scale. Rations for one week for family of five persons: Milk, 11 tins; flour or Boer meal, 25 pounds; sugar, 5 pounds; butter, 12 ounces; soap, 2½ pounds; meat (tins), 14 pounds (Cd. 1551).

'The Boers on the Vaal River are very dissatisfied. It appears that the repatriation in Heidelberg are issuing groceries, such as tea, coffee, sugar, soap, candles, etc., while here they are only issuing 1 pound of biscuits and 1 pound of bully beef to all persons over the age of twelve, and half of that to those under twelve' (South African Constabulary Report, Frankfort District, dated August 11, 1902).

[2] 'The babes and weaklings were not forgotten, and sixty cows were handed on easy terms to those who required milk and who could not pay for it' (extract from Senekal District Report).

the department had to provide medical attendance, and to supply those numerous and various articles which the term 'medical comforts' is commonly held to include.

Recuperation and resettlement after a desolating and protracted war must necessarily be gradual in any country. The situation in South Africa was complicated by the problem of racial conciliation and other political difficulties. At the commencement of repatriation these difficulties grew greater rather than less, and dissatisfaction tended rather to increase than to diminish. In another chapter it has been remarked that political feeling probably ran higher in the Orange River Colony than elsewhere, while the feud existing between the National Scouts and the guerillas, together with the baneful influence of the Dutch Reformed Church, have been described. South Africa has gained a reputation as 'a land of lies.' In addition to a scurrilous local press,[1] in which sedition was regarded by the Government rather as an eccentricity than a crime, the district commissions came face to face with the 'systematic perjury of the veldt.' There was ever present 'the sullen suspicion of the ignorant majority, encouraged by the active ill-will of the educated few.' Men were not wanting who misinterpreted every act of the administration. The irreconcilables cherished the same ideals as their kinsmen in the Cape Colony, and they fondly put their trust in the same tactics. Their aim remained the creation of a great Afrikander Republic,

[1] 'Bloemfontein for the moment is likely to prove a storm centre of manufactured disaffection, the character of which it is desirable to notice. A powerful syndicate of irreconcilables and disaffected Boers have taken over the management of the *Bloemfontein Friend*, a newspaper which bids fair to outstrip even its journalistic fellows at the Cape in the malignancy of its attacks on British rule and British administration generally. The *Friend* is controlled, among others, by three of the most capable Boers in the Orange River Colony—ex-Judge Hertzog, Mr. Abraham Fischer, and Mr. Wessels. Edited with undoubted skill, it forms the rallying-point of every seditious element in the new colonies. Many statements which find their way into its columns are placed there with a view to consumption by, and edification of, the English Pro-Boers. In fact, the *Friend* is undoubtedly in close relations with the latter, as well as with the Bond in Cape Colony. Statements which reach England viâ Bloemfontein may accordingly be received with more than usual circumspection, especially when they emanate from this most able organ of Anglophobism' ('The New Era in South Africa,' p. 40).

and, having failed to achieve it by the sword, they now looked forward to its accomplishment by political intrigue. They spread the belief that the magnanimity and liberality of the Government were but a sign of weakness, and the outcome of a fear that the Boers, if not well treated, would rise again and oust Great Britain from South Africa. They did not scruple to use our very generosity as a means of poisoning against us the minds of those who were its objects.

The first set-back to the great expectations formed during the war was the revelation, immediately after the declaration of peace, of the appalling havoc wrought by the clearance policy. Owing to the senseless guerilla warfare so long indulged in by the enemy, devastation in its later stages had not been occasional or accidental, but continuous and systematic.[1]

The population to be dealt with was strangely composite, and there were many discordant notes to harmonize. The British subject, who had seen his homestead wrecked or his store looted by the British army, 'might well be excused a certain bitterness against his own country.' A still harder case was that of the Britisher who had in course of time become a burgher. 'Reckoned by the Boers as a Briton and by the Britons as a Boer,' his loyalty had been severely strained. The scene to which the veldt Boer returned may be better imagined than described. When the repatriation waggon, having discharged its load and started on its return journey, had disappeared over the horizon, the spectacle which met his gaze was calculated to unnerve a stronger man. 'The irreconcilable stood gloomily aloof or swore deeply under his breath as he reached his devastated home and saw how fire and Nature had combined to turn his cultivated land into a waste and his roof-tree into various

[1] 'Every farmhouse we passed was in the same condition—roofless, windowless, dams broken, water-furrows choked, and orchards devastated. Our way of making war may be effective as war, but it inflicts terrible wounds upon the land. After a campaign of a dozen bloody fights reconstruction is simple; the groundwork remains for a new edifice. But though the mortality be relatively small, our late methods have come very near to destroying the foundations of rural life' ('The African Colony').

reddish parallelograms, with the nettles and black-jack weed growing thickly around.'[1] Mr. Kruger had purposed to 'stagger humanity'; the clearance policy in its effect staggered the Boer. The latter had persisted in fighting, to use his own catchword, 'to the bitter end.' That end was bitter indeed. 'A few set to work,' wrote the Resident Magistrate at Heilbron, 'with mules and horses, but more were content to deplore the lack of oxen and sheep, which in the condition of things could not come yet. The stillness and absence of life in their outlook on the farms struck all. All day long in the office of the commission the weary phrases were repeatedly hammered out: "Not a living thing, not a hoof!" '

The Boer returned to his farm, but the immediate purpose of such return was not at first quite obvious.[2] His bijwoners were scattered; his natives were still away; he had no animals to plough with and no seed to sow. The repair of the house was a secondary consideration, which could well afford to wait. His standard of material comfort was not high, and a tent was quite good enough to go on with. Unaccustomed to luxuries, repatriation rations sufficed him; but, primitive as his farming methods may have been, to live without his flocks and herds was an existence he had never contemplated, and the land to him was the beginning and end of all things. He became despondent. Extreme depression, then, characterized the first stage of repatriation and the initial period of the Boer's return—a depression which the Repatriation Department was not in a position immediately to lighten.

The Boers were not to blame, nor was the department. The more intelligent Boers 'showed, with few exceptions,' wrote Lord Milner of this period, 'great patience under hardships, and much energy and resourcefulness in making the best of the small means at their disposal. They recognised almost to a man that we were doing all we possibly could to

[1] *Morning Post*, January 28, 1904.

[2] 'Farmers are anxious to get to work, but not having any living animal with which to start, they are simply sitting down doing nothing. Many of them have money to purchase stock, but they have at present no opportunity of purchasing' (South African Constabulary Report, Dewetsdorp).



Early Occupation.



A Typical Ruin.

assist them; and while, no doubt, there was a certain lethargy at first on the part of the poorest and landless class, who showed considerable reluctance to quit the concentration camps, the better-to-do farmers were all of them most earnest in stimulating the others to work both by precept and example, and showed the greatest anxiety to counteract any inertia and undue dependence on the Government on the part of the Boer population generally.'[1]

But the transport, which had at first been taken up in answering the calls made upon it by the administration and in ministering to the needs of the general population, was for a longer period wholly occupied in clearing the refugee camps and in supplying the people with food.[2] Few animals could be sold on account of disease, and still fewer could be devoted to ploughing.[3] Moreover, the congestion on the railways was still appalling. The seed ordered in June could not be got up to railhead, much less transported for days over the veldt. Ploughs from America lay in Durban and Port Elizabeth, and the few purchased locally were absolutely insufficient.

[1] Parliamentary Paper, Cd. 1551. 'One thing must never be supposed for a moment: no liberality will ever win gratitude from the Boers. They accept everything as their right, without surprise or gratification. Refusal they take with equal equanimity. They are very open to painstaking explanation in a country where time is apparently no object. If they feel no gratitude, at least they make no complaints. Their educated mouthpieces do that to perfection, and are partly justified; but the Boer farmer is too shy or too much of a gentleman to do so personally.'

[2] 'The burghers were pouring back over the sea, and all available transport was working seven days a week to return them to their farms. The nearest point on the railway to Senekal was Winburg, forty miles away. Every mouthful of meal and meat had to cover this forty miles by mule or ox waggon over a rough road and dangerous spruits. The oxen took three days to do the distance, and breakdowns and delays were frequent' (extract from Senekal Report).

'Officer commanding prisoners of war, Durban, wishes to send forward prisoners just arrived to Harrismith, but I cannot cope with them yet' (wire from Harrismith, dated July 25, 1902).

[3] 'The difficulties which beset the commission may easily be imagined when there were so few animals to be divided among so many applicants. As in all cases where there is competition and rivalry, dissatisfaction—or, rather, disappointment—was the order of the day among those who could not be supplied. Each farmer had to have a minimum of six horses or oxen, and the number of animals at the disposal of the commission would not go far. Our late enemies, however, bore their disappointments with excellent fortitude' (extract from Vredefort District Report).

Under these circumstances the department hung fire. The reasons were obvious to any fair-minded man, but the country Boer did not understand them, and political agitators and the local press were not anxious to enlighten him on the subject.

The repatriation scheme, like Article X., on which it was founded, was capable of more than one interpretation. 'Article X. was briefly a statement of the price paid by the British Government for the surrender of the Boer forces![1] The handsoppers should, therefore, have been excluded from benefiting by its provisions![2] Being embodied in the terms of Vereeniging, repatriation was the people's right, and there was no reason why they should feel grateful. While all Boers, with the exception above quoted, were entitled to their share of the free grant, the *wilde Boeren* had a prior claim to consideration, and the administration of the funds should have been placed in the hands of the irreconcilables! This had not been done. It was clear to the irreconcilable that Great Britain was not carrying out her pledges, and he felt it his bounden duty to point out this fact to his more ignorant neighbours!' It is to be feared that in the early stages of repatriation he found ready listeners.

[1] 'Very little can be gathered from the farmers as to their interpretation of Article X.; but at one time they were loud in their demands and most persistent in their attempts to get their share, with a little more if possible, of the £3,000,000, which to their minds their leaders had obtained as the price of their surrender. One instance I give out of many. One morning one of—if not the very richest of—the rich farmers in this district came to this office with a long list of his requirements. The list included, among other things, food, seed, building material, and live-stock. His surprise and indignation were great when his application, or rather demand, was refused. This man was the owner of at least five farms, all unmortgaged. He was for years Veldt-Kornet of the district, as well as a member of the Raad. He was a good specimen of the better-to-do Boer—shrewd, a successful farmer, a leader on all political or social questions. But he had overlooked the proviso that the three millions were intended for those who could not help themselves' (Bethlehem Report).

A somewhat similar case to the foregoing was that of the son of Mr. Abraham Fischer, who managed his father's farm. This gentleman applied to the Assistant-Secretary for repatriation aid, although it was common knowledge that an offer of some £40,000 from the military authorities had been refused for the farm in question.

[2] 'The "hardloopers" or "bitterenders" loudly questioned the right of the "handsoppers" to share in repatriation benefits' (Bethehem Report).

The repatriation scheme suffered for the sins of other schemes, notably Lord Roberts' proclamations promising protection. In most cases the Boer had not been protected, and he not unnaturally looked upon a Government promise as of doubtful value. Article X. had spoken of a free grant, but he was called upon to sign an acknowledgment of indebtedness for all provisions supplied to him. There was a general outcry at the contemplation of repayment of any kind. In this connection repatriation suffered for the sins of the concentration camps. We took people into these camps, we taught them, and fed them, and clothed them, and doctored them for nothing; in a word, we destroyed their independence. The lesson was too easy of learning, and too adapted to Boer propensities to be easily eradicated. When the Boer came out of camp he had lost all idea of paying for anything. He was only too willing to draw rations because he had no wish to starve, and he had already an inkling that ration issues would be struck off charge. The district commissions were alive to the situation. 'A burning question,' wrote the Resident Magistrate at Heilbron, 'was that of rations. On the one hand, the people were accustomed to receive too readily; on the other, the commission was too reluctant to give. Harassed by well-to-do and needy alike, it was not unnatural for men so placed to be fearful of pauperizing the district irretrievably, to wonder where it would end, to miss the calmer wisdom of a free hand at the outset.'

But the Boer regarded a loan on his farm in a very different light. His view again was based on the teaching of the political agitator, who did not fail to see in the loan system a deeply-laid plot to rob the Dutch population of the land, after having practically ruined the Boers and involved them hopelessly in debt.[1] At the commencement the Boers displayed a marked reluctance to mortgage their lands, and they

[1] 'They are spreading the belief that our magnanimity is only a sign of weakness, and also that in giving them so much assistance we have cunningly tied a millstone of debt round their necks in order to obtain a hold upon their lands' (*Northern Whig*, October 19, 1903).

never availed themselves to the full of the exceptional advantages offered under the liberal scheme of loans. But, much as he disliked and distrusted the new Government, the irreconcilable was always planning to get what he could out of it. While warning his neighbours to stand aloof, his practice was to get all he could, to ask for more, and to complain if he did not get it. 'His guileless soul pondered over many schemes to get the better of the Repatriation Boards, and occasionally when his schemes resulted as he desired, he swore that the "Rooinek" was not such a bad fellow after all, with an afterthought, however, not so favourable to the "Rooinek's" intelligence, and no expression of gratitude for favours received.'[1] It is true that small owners, again, who were already deeply involved frequently attempted to realize another loan on their fixed property, with the pious intention of robbing the Government. Unfortunately for them, the commissioners were all local men, who knew to a penny the value of the security in question. Where a new-comer might have been deceived, the presence of a former resident or an ex-Commandant as members of the local boards acted as a seasonable check on fraud.

When draught animals and live-stock later became available, the malcontents were not slow to spread the report that, in advancing money and insisting on the borrower taking a portion of the value lent in kind, the Government was making an arrangement by which it got rid at a fictitious value of a class of stock much damaged by hardships suffered during the war.[2] This prejudice, unhappily, gained force in some cases, owing to the large proportion of losses from disease amongst the horses and mules which were issued in the first instance. Still later, when the crops would not grow on account of the drought, the local wise-acres were not at a loss

[1] *Morning Post*, January 28, 1904.

[2] 'In their usual suspicious way, they have the idea firmly rooted in their minds that the Government wishes to make money out of them and to force them to buy from the repatriation. Consequently, many have refused their loans' (extract from Report of Resident Magistrate at Winburg, dated August 21, 1902).

for an explanation. It was stated that the Repatriation Department had issued kiln-dried mealies for seed.[1] This statement, like most others, had not a shadow of foundation, but it served the purpose of its authors.

In the course of September, however, matters began to improve considerably, as the obstacles which had faced the department at the start were gradually overcome. Although the strain upon the railways continued, they began from that time forward to reduce by degrees the enormous accumulation of stuff at the ports, and supplies of all kinds began to struggle up-country. As the considerable numbers of troops in the colony were concentrated and removed to the coast for embarkation, an increasingly larger number of railway trucks became available. Repatriation theoretically had to take its chance with the general public in the great demand for truckage, but in practice the department was given every facility by the courtesy of the railway authorities. The reduction in their transport requirements enabled the military to spare more and more of their animals and vehicles, and every consignment taken over improved in quality. In the meantime the repatriation transport, although far from satisfactory, had become more efficient. As the winter passed away and the early rains improved the veldt, the transport mules and oxen mended in condition, and the work of repatriation went steadily forward. Rest and good grazing brought round many animals which had hitherto been unfit for even light duty into a workable condition. Disease lost little of its deadly grip, but segregation and the mallein test rendered sales possible and also loans in kind. Although the supply of rations was still a burning question, the district commissions managed to establish and stock their outlying depots.[2] Moreover, the department as a whole had pulled

[1] 'Imported grain is often kiln-dried to preserve it on the voyage. Such grain is useless for seed. It takes an expert to recognise the difference.'

[2] *E.g.*, 'During the month the board has established distributing posts at Sterkfontein, Wolvespruit, and Rietvlei. The object of these posts is to relieve those widows, cripples, and sickly people who have not the means of coming into Boshof to draw rations' (extract from Boshof District Report for October, 1902).

itself together; the officials knew their work, and the local boards had made themselves more intimately acquainted with the requirements of their respective districts.

The first duty of the Repatriation Department was to settle the Boers on their farms; the second, to ration them until they could reap their crops. By the end of October both these duties had been to some extent performed. But a third and more important task still remained. Feeding the people was only a stop-gap at the best. The central idea was to make them independent. Not only had the people to be restored to the land; the land must be rendered fit to support the people. With the close of the winter and the return of a large portion of the country population to their homes, there arose a general clamour, ever increasing in intensity, for ploughs and for animals to draw them. Fortunately, the department was able to respond. The ploughs had begun to arrive, and the animals had improved in condition. It was further decided, if necessary, to cut down the refugee camp convoys, and to postpone the return of those who were not yet back, because it was possible to plough for them in their absence.[1] The wheat-sowing season in July had inevitably been allowed to slide, on account of the conditions then prevailing; but mealies, upon which the majority of the people would have to depend in the ensuing year, if they were not to continue to be supported by the Government, must needs be sown in all districts before the end of December, and in the majority by the middle of that month.[2] Loans in kind were therefore hastened, and every effort was made to distribute available animals to trustworthy and reliable farmers. As to the terms on which ploughing should be done, much was left to the discretion of the local commissions; but they were instructed to pay particular heed to the requirements of the poorer bijwoners.

[1] 'Transport is still the great difficulty, but most of our oxen are taken up in ploughing in the district' (extract from Winburg Report for October, 1902).

[2] 'The work had to be done at once in order that the period of dependence and privation might not be continued for another year' (*South Africa*, October 17, 1903).

This was not only just, but expedient. The department throughout made every effort to induce landowners to take back their former quota of bijwoners, in order that the latter might be repatriated on the same terms as previous to the war. The landowners, however, being themselves impoverished, declined to do so unless such assistance were given to the bijwoners by the department as would make their return advantageous. Accordingly, just as rations had been issued to them on which to subsist, so animals were now lent to them with which to plough, and seed given them to sow.

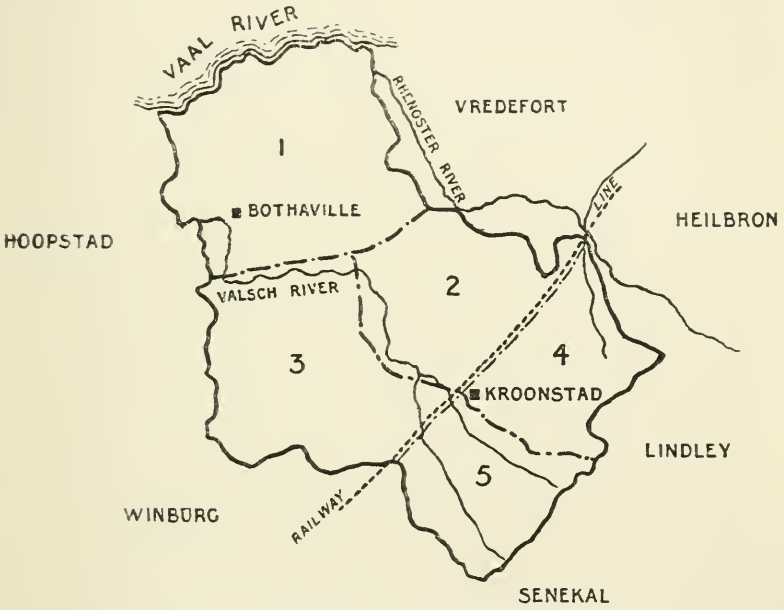
The ploughing schemes adopted varied in the different districts, and one or two examples will now be given by way of illustration. 'There are now,' wrote the Resident Magistrate in a report dated Winburg, September 23, 1902, 'over 600 oxen distributed throughout the districts of Winburg and Senekal, with waggons, drivers, leaders, ploughs, seeds, and everything necessary. These are equally divided, and placed at the disposal of the commissioners of the different wards, who in turn see that all farmers, and especially the smaller ones, get a fair share of ground ploughed for them and seed supplied. By this method everyone gets a fair chance. Instead of charging them hire for the oxen, my commission has asked for one quarter of the crop.[1] Our reasons for doing this are to help cover incidental expenses, the wages of the drivers and leaders, and to make up for losses through death of oxen, breakages, etc. Secondly, if we were to charge so much per diem, many would not be in a position to pay, and the oxen would be overworked by those who hired them. Thirdly, it is necessary to give every encouragement to those who are in a position to do so to plough with their own animals, and we can then devote a longer period to the more needy farmers.'

[1] This was not eventually recovered. 'The seeds issued last season were given to the farmers on the condition that they should return to the commission a quarter of all crops reaped from the seeds supplied. Owing to the total failure of the crops, nothing has been received, nor can anything be expected' (extract from Winburg Report for the month of June, 1903).

The ploughing scheme adopted in the Kroonstad district was somewhat more elaborate. 'The district,' to quote a report from the chairman dated Kroonstad, November 18, 'was divided into five areas, as shown on map attached. Area 1: Bothaville subdistrict. Head conductor and 100 oxen. Owing to the poverty of this area and to the number of indigent families on each farm, especially on the Vaal and Rhenoster Rivers, I have found it impossible to obtain security for every team. The ploughing is therefore under the direct supervision of the conductor, who investigates each case and reports to this office. The teams consist of eight oxen and a No. 75 plough. Some thirty families have already got in their seed. Areas 2, 3, 4, and 5, 600 oxen. These teams consist of four oxen and a light plough. They are in every case secured on the signature of a landowner, and are under the general supervision of a sub-conductor in each area. The sub-conductor is provided with a map of his section showing all farms. The teams and all changes are marked on his map when he makes his report once a week. He is instructed to report on the amount of seed put into the ground, the general state of the crops, the rainfall, and the cases of destitution, if any, which may come under his notice. In spite of drought in these areas, a fair amount of seed has been sown. General: A large scale-map showing the areas is kept, with the position of each team clearly marked. A ploughing register, with a full page for each team, shows the history of that particular team from date to date, seed ploughed in, security, etc. The oxen are only allowed for a period of three weeks, and only plough for six hours per diem.'

In the Ficksburg district 700 oxen were given out during September in spans of four, six, or eight, for ploughing purposes to farmers in turn, so that by December a large crop of mealies had been planted. Owing to their proximity to Basutoland, the farmers in this district could purchase ploughs and trek-gear for themselves, and the bijwoners could borrow from their more prosperous neighbours. The circumstances

of Ladybrand were similar, and animals and seed were the only essentials. 'Hundreds of applications,' to quote a report from that district, 'were made for ploughs, yokes, chains, and even reims. These were in no case granted, because the applicants were considered by the commissioners to be able to purchase locally for themselves. When their applications were refused, they seemed to have no difficulty in providing




MAP OF PLOUGHING AREAS, KROONSTAD DISTRICT.

themselves with these necessary articles. One thousand bags of mealies were bought and issued for seed purposes.'[1] In Heilbron sixty ploughing teams were organized on similar

[1] One bag of mealies is sufficient to sow forty acres. 'In August, 1902, fifty-one waggons with oxen were taken over from the military. Of these, ten were transferred to Ficksburg and ten to Wepener. Of the remainder, sixteen were put on the road for transport purposes and fifteen spans of oxen were distributed among the farmers, fifteen waggons being sold. An additional 1,600 oxen were taken over locally from the military farms in this district, and at once distributed to the Boers in small spans of sixes and eights' (extract from Ladybrand Report).

lines to those already described in the case of Winburg. In some districts, especially in Bethlehem and Vredefort, the military afforded great assistance by lending their waggons for the transport of refugees and stores, and thus rendering repatriation animals available for ploughing. 'Three hundred and twenty oxen,' wrote the Resident Magistrate at Vredefort, '150 mules, and 35 waggons were the total stock of our transport service, and 4,000 people had to be fed, and the food transported 25 miles. Not much assistance was, therefore, available for the farmer. The military, however, came to the rescue, and loaned 240 oxen and 15 waggons for transport, which freed a corresponding number of repatriation spans for distribution among the farmers. About 500 horses were also obtained, and these, too, were distributed for ploughing. Two thousand six hundred acres have been ploughed.'

Love of animals is not a Boer characteristic. They were inconsiderate to their own animals, and still more so to those lent to them by the Repatriation Department. One of the least agreeable experiences during the war was to find domestic pets, like cats and dogs, left callously behind to starve, not only by the commandos, but also by the Boer women and children, when they were removed to the concentration camps. Many of these became attached to British regiments, and were fed and cared for by the soldiers; for Mr. Atkins, even on half rations, would stint himself rather than allow an animal to go hungry. Others quickly turned wild. 'It was curious to note,' stated a report on the early stage of reoccupation, 'the rapidity with which the tame animals had become wild, whilst the wild had in a great measure forgotten their fear of man. For some time after the reoccupation of the town, hares were to be found in the streets and gardens, and packs of dogs of all breeds, running perfectly wild, were to be seen in the hills round. At times they joined the jackals, and both would enter the town at night, keeping up an incessant concert. On one occasion a pack of these dogs, driven thereto by extreme hunger, attempted to pull down a bullock in broad daylight, close to the town. The bullock

was too weak to make any defence, and had to be rescued. In the outlying portions of the district sheep repeatedly fell victims to the attacks of these dogs, the number of which was only reduced by the constant use of poison round the kraals.'[1]

In several districts the animals lent to individuals for the purpose of ploughing were overworked, and a warning had consequently to be issued by the Central Board in the following terms: 'The Board desires to bring to the notice of the district commissions that, while there is no wish to fetter their discretion as to the lending or hiring of repatriation stock to farmers for the purpose of ploughing their lands, such loan or hire must be under their direct supervision. Every care must be taken to secure such reasonable use of the animals that they do not suffer in condition, so as to render them unfit for the use of others. It must be understood that any cattle dying from overwork whilst so lent out or hired will be replaced or paid for by the persons to whom the use has been granted.'[2]

While mealies formed the main crop, a certain amount of Kaffir corn and large quantities of seed potatoes were issued. Potatoes were a rapid-growing crop, and could be relied upon to yield a quick return, which was a great essential when the supply of food was so urgent. The farms of the still absent prisoners of war and of others who had not yet returned were not neglected. It was only natural that those on the spot managed to obtain the first attention of the commissions, but on the farms of all absentees from eight to ten acres were ploughed and sown. This ploughing of their lands appealed to the Boers to a greater extent than perhaps any other measure undertaken by the department for their welfare. At no time did popular feeling towards the new Government approach more nearly to gratitude; at no time did that gratitude appear more genuine. 'We now see,' it was said, 'that the British really mean to help us.'[3] 'Nothing gave the

[1] Smithfield District Report.
[2] Circular L.
[3] Heilbron Report.

Boers,' said a Ladybrand report, 'so much satisfaction as the loan of these oxen for ploughing.'

Simultaneously with the repatriation of the white population, the natives were restored either to their former homes or to homes which they elected to choose. The dislocation caused by the concentration policy was dealt with in another chapter, and some account has been given of the organization and conduct of the native refugee camps. It has been seen that in those camps the natives were housed, protected, and fed upon a regular system, while methods were adopted which enabled them to pick and hoe the ground and plant crops for their own support. Practically the whole of the native farming population had in one way or another been displaced during the war, and had now to be returned. For the resumption of the agricultural industry the return of the blacks was as essential as that of the whites, because the prosperity of farming hinged largely on the supply of native labour.

The effect of the war upon the native is probably difficult to estimate with any degree of accuracy, for the native mind is possibly not less complex than that of the ingenious Boer.[1] In that war, although he did not appear on the surface, although he was not eulogized in the columns of the press, and although he did not receive the decorations granted to others, the native had played no insignificant part.[2] Regarded, at least theoretically, as a non-belligerent, he was in constant

[1] When hostilities ceased 'the native mind was a good deal unhinged. The war had bewildered them. Many of them were full of money and very independent; some had had their homes destroyed, the repair of which was a first charge upon their time; some required repatriation. . . . There was a great demand on all sides for native labourers' (Cd. 1551).

[2] 'Tribes like the Basutos, who have had the opportunity of discriminating between Boer and British methods, were only prevented by force from combining with the British against the foes of their race. This is the best evidence of the extent and vigour of Dutch persecution, for the niggers have no particular reason for loving the British. In war with the latter they have lost all that they prize most, and in the struggle between the two white races they have been exposed to all the dangers and hardships, without any of the compensations of war. This was very clearly demonstrated in the recent campaign' ('A Subaltern's Letters to his Wife,' p. 88).

requisition by both sides for the performance of duties which were none the less arduous and important because less glorious and brilliant.

'The gradual advance of the British troops, culminating in the annexation of the country and the scattering of the Boer forces into guerilla bands—these facts impressed themselves by degrees on the native mind, so that the result of the war was a foregone conclusion from the time the country was annexed; but the period intervening between the annexation and the declaration of peace was sufficient to wear down any great impression which the British victories in the early stages of the war may have made on the native mind.'[1] The events of the war had, consequently, probably bewildered the majority of the natives, and at its close the feeling generally among them was one of relief that the question of who should rule over them was at length determined. They welcomed the change in administration, and were prepared to settle down in a quiet and orderly manner. But many, while gratefully accepting British rule, were inclined to despise the conquered Boers. They had formed great expectations. They had somehow come to think that the Boer farmers and landowners would no longer occupy the same position as hitherto, and that the relations of master and servant would be changed. Some had even contemplated a division of Boer farms among themselves as direct tenants of the Government. On this score their minds were very quickly disillusioned. They were very promptly made to understand 'that British and Boer were henceforth to live side by side, and unite in one common endeavour to restore the country to its pre-war state, and to work together for its future prosperity, and that they, the natives, had their part to fulfil in these united efforts.'[2] There were others, again, who had been demoralized, and had, 'in consequence of the familiarity shown to them by the British soldiery, and of receiving inordinately high wages, become insolent and overbearing.'[3]

[1] Cd. 1551. [2] Cd. 1551. [3] Cd. 1551.

From a material point of view the natives suffered considerably from the ravages of the war, but not to so large an extent as the whites. Both the British columns and the Boer commandos requisitioned freely the natives' stock and supplies for military purposes; but for these full receipts were always given by the British, and occasionally by the Boers. Although these receipts were discharged, however, very soon after the conclusion of peace, compensation money would not buy cattle until the country was restocked. Natives on farms near the railway were obliged to abandon their standing crops, and were, in accordance with Lord Kitchener's order, prohibited from planting others. But they were allowed to drive their stock into the native refugee camps. On the other hand, natives in the large locations suffered little, and all natives throughout the war were paid heavily for the services they rendered. At the close of hostilities, therefore, although want was experienced in certain districts, and had to be met by the establishment of grain depots, the position of the native on the whole was a more or less independent one. He was possessed of the wherewithal to purchase his requirements, and he could afford to pick and choose in the kind of employment which he was prepared to undertake.

The position of the farm native before the war was somewhat analogous to that of the bijwoner. Families were allowed to live on the farms and to cultivate land allotted to them in return for labour supplied without payment.[1] The system was obviously wrong in principle, and it was frequently

[1] In the Orange River Colony not more than five native families were allowed on any one farm without special permission from the Resident Magistrate. The conditions of residence were generally the following: Native families were allowed to build huts and kraals, to graze stock, and to cultivate land free of charge. In return they undertook to provide: (*a*) One or more young natives for herding, grooming, milking. These lived at the homestead, and received food and £3 or a heifer a year. (*b*) One or more girls to attend at the house daily to fetch fuel, water, etc., and to do the rougher household work. (*c*) Able-bodied natives to assist without payment in doing all ordinary work on the farm. (*d*) Extra work, such as dam-making, brick-making, and riding transport, to be done at agreed prices. While working the natives were provided with food, meal, and skim milk if available. They were given a ewe occasionally if the farmer wished to be generous.

unsatisfactory in practice. The sounder method was for the native to pay rent and the farmer wages, the respective amounts being agreed upon when arrangements for residence were made. The native had grown accustomed to a definite contract, with wages paid at regular intervals, during his military service, and he was disinclined to return to farm work on uncertain terms.

The feeling between the Boers and the natives was somewhat strained, for several reasons. As a rule they had been respectively on different sides during hostilities. Anyhow, during the later stages of the conflict the native had usually managed to sit on what he imagined to be the safer side of the fence. Many Boers treated their servants well, but the treatment meted out to natives by unscrupulous Boers previous to the war undoubtedly served to embitter them against their former masters. Moreover, in most cases the Boers rightly felt that they had not had the sympathy of the natives during the war. This strained feeling was to be expected, and it was intensified by the fact that a vast amount of indiscrimate cattle-lifting by both Boers and natives had taken place. There is little doubt that the Boer commandos seized at random or requisitioned the property of natives, and it is equally certain that for every receipt given two or three more were due. It is unquestionable that, in the absence of local commandos, the natives retaliated by driving off Boer stock. Hence at the termination of hostilities the feeling of irritation on both sides was profound. Under these circumstances the natives were afraid to return to their former masters, lest they might be subjected to ill-treatment.

On the whole, however, little trouble was experienced. Both Boers and natives showed an admirable disposition to let bygones be bygones, and to start afresh. The farmers were keen to get their labour back, for the shortage of native labour was not confined to the mining industry; and the army of occupation, the police, and the repatriation and other Government departments employed a large number of blacks. The Repatriation Department did all in its power to impress

upon the natives the advisability of coming to terms with the farmers on whose land they had lived before the war, and every effort was made to soothe all ill-feeling and to facilitate return. The natives went forth from the camps as they had come in, with no cares and few wants, unambitious and happy-go-lucky; they displayed their usual readiness to adapt themselves to circumstances, which is not the least delightful of their characteristics.

On June 1, 1902, the number of native refugee camps in the Orange River Colony was thirty, with a population of 60,604. This number was immediately afterwards considerably increased by the influx into the camps of a large number of 'boys,' who had hitherto been employed as transport drivers, etc., with the various columns in the field, and who came to rejoin their families when the work of repatriation commenced. This work proceeded very slowly at first, because, in addition to the moral and political difficulties previously enumerated, the natives were disinclined to leave the camps until a portion of their military receipts had been paid; and several of the repatriation district commissions took up the illogical and unpractical position that their duty was to repatriate burghers only, and that the natives must get back in the best way they could. These commissions had to be reminded that the work of repatriation embraced all classes and all colours, that they were concerned equally with the repatriation of natives as well as whites, and that a percentage of their transport must be devoted to this purpose.[1] At the same time, as a first instalment, £100,000 was disbursed in

[1] In this connection the following circular was issued: 'Chairmen of district Repatriation Commissions will be good enough to understand that they are concerned equally with the repatriation of natives as well as the repatriation of whites. In view of the present demand on the part of farmers for native labour, it is of the utmost importance that natives should be returned to the land as soon as possible. These natives will be supplied with four months' rations, the cost of which will be paid, one half by the Native Refugee Department and one half by the Repatriation Department. The cost of transport will be borne by the latter department. You are therefore requested to afford the Native Refugee Department and the superintendents of the native refugee camps in your district every assistance, and your waggons should be used periodically and at your discretion for transporting natives of your district back to their homes.'



Some Conductors and 'Boys.'

payment of native receipts. By the close of the winter the number of native refugees had been reduced to 38,549, by the end of December to 6,968, and on January 21, 1903, only 77 remained. These were the sick and aged, with no home and unable to work. For them special arrangements had subsequently to be made.

All native families on leaving the camps were provided with four months' supply of meal, which they were allowed to purchase at half-price if they were well provided with money; in necessitous cases no charge was made, the cost being shared equally between the Repatriation Department and the Native Refugee Department. This issue was of great assistance to the farmers, whose main difficulty was to provide food for their native labourers, without whom farming operations were at a standstill.[1]

In spite of the urgent demand for labour and the high wages offered in the towns, the majority of the camp natives returned to farms in their old districts, and in numerous cases to their former masters. The natives of the Orange River Colony, both Kaffirs and Basutos, are fundamentally agriculturists, and they prefer the outside life on the veldt to the more confined existence afforded in the towns. But their return to the farms is indicative of the satisfactory treatment they received from the Boers.[2]

In addition to the numbers given above, 6,000 natives were repatriated into the Orange River Colony at the request of the Natal Government. These people had trekked with their

[1] 'I am simply beset for natives by the farmers, many of whom live from twenty to thirty miles from camp. The natives could walk thither, but they cannot carry four months' food supplies on their heads that distance' (extract from Heilbron Report, dated October 9, 1902).

[2] 'I am glad to be able to report a growing disposition on the part of natives to work on farms, which is due to the good treatment they on the whole receive from the farmers. Taken as a class, I consider that the farmers show great consideration to their native tenants and labourers. In the many small disputes which the natives have asked the commissioners to inquire into, the farmer has in every instance been found willing to consider the question when put before him on behalf of the native, and by this means it has been possible to settle many disputes to the satisfaction of both the parties' (Mr. H. F. Wilson's Report, Cd. 2104).

flocks and herds into Natal at the outbreak of the war, and settled down below the Drakensberg. They were practically all returned to the districts whence they originally came, with very little trouble, as in most cases they were well-to-do and were provided with both money and stock. On their arrival in the Orange River Colony rations were supplied to those who required them at Van Reenan's Pass and Harrismith.

When the camps had been cleared, a number of natives—10,000 approximately—were found to have collected in various locations, chiefly at Thaba N'Chu, Bloemfontein, and Kroonstad. They consisted mainly of displaced tenants from Boer farms, and of various people who had drifted together, as natives will sometimes do, for no particular reason and with no specific object in view. They were uncertain of their past, and more uncertain of their future. They were, apparently, prepared to wait indefinitely for something to turn up, and they had, therefore, to be roused. Labour was still in strong demand. The farmers were approached, and, as employment was found for them, these natives were gradually distributed.[1]

With the sowing of the mealie lands closed the first stage of the Repatriation Department's task, and it is, therefore, necessary to take stock, as it were, and to see what had been done and what still remained. Between June 1 and October 31 the reduction in the numbers of the people originally in the refugee camps, in addition to all fresh arrivals from over-sea, was approximately 30,000, leaving at the latter date 11,000 still in the camps. By the end of November these again had been very materially reduced, and by the close of the year all the camps were shut down with the exception of the Brandfort Camp, which had to be continued for the accommodation of widows and orphans, and of others who were sick and destitute or who had no fixed abode.

Up to December 31, 1902, the sum of £51,157 had been

[1] The total cost of native repatriation was £27,652 9s. 11d. This included free issues of rations to the extent of £4,809 12s. 11d., and belated railway charges in connection with the native refugee camps amounting to £5,190 7s. 11d.

lent out on mortgage, while promissory notes had been registered to the value of £62,734. It would be difficult to assess the value of the acknowledgments of indebtedness accepted during this period, as the sum of £220,108 entered under the heading of unsecured loans included not only acknowledgments of indebtedness, but also a considerable portion of mortgages and promissory notes which were still awaiting registration. £65,879 had been advanced by way of cash loans, and the issues in kind amounted to £323,800. In addition to this £323,800 of loans in kind, stock and stores to the value of £143,681 were disposed of under the head of cash sales, making a total of £467,481 issued out of the grand total of £1,186,107 for stock and stores purchased. Of this grand total the sum of £95,000 had to be written off for loss of live-stock, and it was estimated that a further sum of £115,964 would have to be deducted as the probable loss on the difference between the prices paid to the military and the prices realized by the department on reissue to the burghers. The total expenditure was £1,310,789 12s. 8d.; the cost of administration £34,005 17s. 8d., or approximately $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.[1]

These working expenses may appear excessive, but when the circumstances and difficulties surrounding the work are taken into consideration, it is submitted that the net result was not unsatisfactory.[2] Numerous mistakes, many of which have been examined, were undoubtedly made both at headquarters and in the local administration. If much of the work was done well, a good deal was done badly. But the work to be effective had to be prompt. 'We could not,' to

[1] Cd. 1551, where a detailed statement of repatriation accounts up to December 31, 1902, will be found.

[2] 'The costliness of the administration of the Repatriation Department has never been allowed to hinder the business in hand; indeed, the thoroughness with which the work has been carried out might reasonably be pleaded as an excuse for the enormous expenditure. The burden, however, has fallen entirely upon the Imperial Government—that is to say, upon the long-suffering British taxpayer. If the working expenses of the Repatriation Department had been nil, the Boers would not have been benefited to the extent of an additional shilling' (*South Africa*, September 19, 1903).

quote Lord Milner, 'stand fiddling over small economies while people starved.' In view of a contingency which had already made itself felt, and which will be dealt with in the next chapter, the department kept in hand a reserve stock to the value of £400,000, which was included in the sum £588,624 19s. 7d.

PARTICULARS OF SEEDS SOWN BY REPATRIATION DEPARTMENT UP TO DECEMBER 31, 1902.

| | Wheat, Bags. | Oats, Bags. | Mealies, Bags. | Barley, Bags. | Kaffir Corn, Bags. | Potatoes, Cases. | Not Named. | Number of People receiving Rations. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bethlehem ... | — | 2,100 | 550 | — | 100 | 295 | — | 2,500 |
| Bethulie ... | — | 1,212 | 170 | — | — | 300 | 286 | 2,000 |
| Bloemfontein | 17 | 200 | 250 | 80 | 195 | 1,000 | — | 5,000 |
| Boshof ... | — | 13 | 170 | — | — | 450 | 300 | 1,000 |
| Edenburg ... | 35 | 85 | — | — | — | 500 | — | 1,390 |
| Fauresmith ... | — | — | — | — | — | — | 600 | 1,000 |
| Ficksburg ... | 38 | 540 | 467 | — | — | 380 | — | 1,316 |
| Frankfort ... | — | 150 | 150 | — | 20 | 1,200 | — | 3,400 |
| Harrismith ... | 56 | 1,977 | 2,854 | — | 232 | 555 | — | 1,750 |
| Heilbron ... | — | 200 | 500 | — | — | — | — | 4,500 |
| Hoopstad ... | — | 16 | 289 | — | 40 | 271 | — | 1,000 |
| Jacobsdal ... | — | — | — | — | — | — | 250 | 600 |
| Kroonstad ... | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1,256 | 3,500 |
| Ladybrand ... | — | 350 | 500 | — | — | 100 | — | 2,500 |
| Lindley ... | — | 30 | 50 | — | — | 20 | — | 2,350 |
| Rouxville ... | 100 | 70 | 500 | 40 | — | 40 | — | 1,350 |
| Smithfield ... | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1,600 | 370 |
| Thaba N'Chu... | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1,000 | 500 |
| Vredefort ... | 60 | 50 | 300 | — | — | 400 | — | 1,200 |
| Vrede ... ... | — | 800 | 600 | — | 50 | 400 | — | 4,000 |
| Wepener ... | — | — | — | — | — | — | 100 | 1,151 |
| Winburg and Senekal ... | — | 310 | 502 | — | — | 444 | — | 8,250 |
| Total ... | 306 | 8,103 | 7,852 | 120 | 637 | 6,355 | 5,392 | 50,627 |

The above return is in several cases incomplete, but it is the only one available.

By the end of 1902, then, the bulk of the people were back or foot returning. They had been supplied with the essentials

for restarting their agricultural pursuits, and they had managed to sow a fairly large mealie crop. There still remained an enormous amount to do to complete the rehabilitation of the people in the way of restocking the country, rebuilding the homesteads, repairing dams and fences, etc. But the most pressing problem—that of providing from the land the absolute necessaries of life for the people during the ensuing year—seemed to have been more or less solved. The change in the attitude of the farming population was, consequently, very noticeable. 'The extreme depression,' wrote Lord Milner, 'which characterized them two or three months earlier had almost completely passed away, and they were looking forward to the future with much more hopefulness.'[1]

[1] Parliamentary Paper, Cd. 1551.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE DROUGHT

'And I will make your heaven as iron and your earth as brass; and your strength shall be spent in vain; for your land shall not yield her increase' (Lev. xxvi. 19).

As regards rainfall, South Africa presents the greatest diversity. But little is known of the climatic history of that portion which is now designated the Orange River Colony. The majority of the early explorers avoided this particular portion of the country, and usually travelled on the western side of the Vaal River. The country lying to the north of the Orange River was, however, commonly regarded as a dry and thirsty land, and was in one instance described as little better than a desert. There can be little doubt that the colony was always subjected to periodical dry seasons, if not to extensive droughts. There are indications, based mainly merely on hearsay, and only recently on meteorological observations, that there were droughts in the years 1821, 1841, 1862, and 1883. The older residents, consequently, very commonly hold the theory that the country is subject to weather cycles, corresponding in some degree to those said to have been experienced in ancient Egypt.

Rainfall observations were taken at Bloemfontein during the years 1879 to 1901 inclusive. The average rainfall for these years was 23·86 inches; the maximum was 34·57 inches in 1881, the minimum 16·05 in 1883. The least quantity of rain which ever fell at Bloemfontein in the first nine months of the year during the period mentioned fell in 1886, when 11·82 inches

were chronicled. From the beginning of January to the end of September in 1903, the year to be considered, only 8·90 inches were registered. What is commonly known as the 'great' drought in South Africa occurred in 1862, but no figures for that year are available, and to all intents and purposes the drought of 1903 would seem to constitute a record. The figures registered at Bloemfontein, however, are not strictly applicable to the rest of the colony. In what follows it will be seen that the drought varied in degree in the different districts. In fact, the drought to be described probably differed materially from those commonly experienced in other countries; and other circumstances, apart from the actual rainfall, must be taken into consideration in tracing its effect.

While there is little doubt that the rainfall in South Africa has since the Creation always been extremely erratic, there is reason to believe that the white occupation of the country has tended rather to heighten than to diminish the possible evil effects of drought. The original pioneers in South Africa, as well as those who have broken fresh ground since, found a country without roads and very few footpaths. Vegetation of a kind was considerable, and veldt grass was high. Although game was abundant, their feeding was irregular, and the new grass grew for the most part under the decaying crops of previous seasons. When, therefore, the rains fell the water was obstructed and held by the vegetation, and no artificial drains enabled it to rush off. The valleys were covered with tall grass and reeds and other growths, and contained few dongas and gutters. Hence it must have taken months for this water to escape, and the absorption by the earth must have been proportionately large. Fountains abounded and perennial streams were numerous.

Since then roads, or rather tracks, have become an ever-increasing feature of the landscape. Flocks of sheep or herds of cattle have trodden innumerable footpaths across the veldt; the grass is cropped short or destroyed by fire. There is nothing on all the expanse of veldt to obstruct and delay the escape of water after rain—save dust. The rainfall, so far as

the Orange River Colony is concerned, is practically confined to four months in the year, and the total is made up to a great extent by heavy showers falling in a short space of time. In consequence, the water, accumulating fast, rushes off into dongas or spruits, and thence to the rivers, which convey it to the sea, giving it no chance to soak into the soil. Every footpath and track becomes a means of drainage. Consequently, rivers become flooded as they never were before within the memory of the oldest inhabitant. The popular conclusion from such an occurrence is that it must have rained more heavily in a short time than it ever did before. Such a conclusion is generally erroneous. The rainfall has not really increased, but the earth's capacity for absorption has been curtailed. The drains and gutters, dongas and sluits, gape everywhere, ready to carry away not only the water, but also the soil and vegetation so sorely needed. The scurrying storm-torrent eats out great dongas where the soil is deep, carries off the shallow soil which scantily covers the rocky earth ribs, and bears away all the most fertile soil to the sea.[1] The effect of heavy rains is, therefore, under these circumstances far from beneficial.

'When rain is wanted,' wrote Mr. Willcocks, in his since famous report on irrigation in South Africa, 'it is generally not there; when it is not wanted it is invariably present.' With this fickle characteristic of the South African climate the Boers had been perfectly familiar for more than half a century, yet, with few exceptions, neither they nor their late Government had ever made any serious attempt to conserve water or to irrigate land. One of their agricultural methods served very materially to facilitate the escape and loss of water already noted. Two excuses have commonly been given for the wanton destruction of valuable fodder—the necessity of

[1] 'The denudation grows by what it feeds on. The soft uneven surface of arable land tends to hold up the water in the soil, and thus to feed the underground springs and act as a means of water conservation; but the hard, dry veldt, untouched by the plough, seamed by sluits converging towards the rivers, holds the rainfall little longer than a slate roof' (*Contemporary Review*, November, 1903).



A Veldt Fire.



Piccaninnies Ploughing.

destroying ticks and obtaining early feed. It is impossible not to sympathize with every endeavour to wage war against ticks, but in regard to the question of food this veldt-burning was a short-sighted policy; for not only did it destroy the seeds of many valuable and nutritious grasses, which were replaced by worthless and poisonous weeds, but it also lessened the supply of humus and seriously diminished the moisture-retaining capacity of the soil. While water and soil deserted the country, the veldt fire aided their destruction and exaggerated the poverty of the land.[1]

The checking of veldt fires was one of the first measures of the new Government, and the drought had one good result in drawing its attention to a larger and still more important question—namely, the scientific conservation of water. Every endeavour must be made to make the best of the rainfall by replacing by artificial means the obstructions which the white man's occupation has removed. The escape of water after rain must be prevented, and it must be enabled to soak into the ground. The surface of the country is in many places honeycombed, and capable of receiving all the water that can be drained into it. Little provision can, however, be made by merely storing a very small percentage of the rainfall on the surface. A topographical or a contour survey will have some day to be undertaken on no limited scale, to see how to regulate the drainage of vast areas so as to keep at least a portion of the rainfall from taking the shortest cut to the sea. The Boer had done little for the conservation of water, and what little he had done had been impaired when repatriation was undertaken. During the war many dams had been broken; during the drought which followed the walls of all became weak; when the rains at last fell even the meagre means of surface conservation gave way.[2]

[1] *Vide* in this connection an address delivered by Mr. W. K. Tucker before the Institute of Surveyors (the *South African Mines, Commerce and Industries*, October 31, 1903, and the *Transvaal Agricultural Journal*, April, 1903).

[2] A disastrous example of this was the 'Bloemfontein Flood.' 'On January 17, 1904, the Bloemspruit was suddenly flooded, owing to a very heavy fall of rain and the bursting of several dams on the western side of

The rainfall during the war was quite up to the average, and the seasons, so far as the process of attrition allowed them to appear, were on the whole good. Farming in the Orange River Colony is usually considered to be a profitable investment if given one good year out of every three. Under ordinary circumstances, therefore, a drought was not too severely felt. Good seasons made up for bad, and the farmer generally had enough from a good year to carry him over one which was less favourable. It was singularly unfortunate that a prolonged and devastating war should have been succeeded by an exceptional drought and a series of non-productive seasons.[1]

It may be convenient to draw attention again to the fact that the seasons in the Orange River Colony are roughly the reverse of those in Europe, the difference being that the winter is the dry, the summer the wet, season. Harvest and springtime vary from a month to six weeks in different localities. While subsidiary crops—such as oats, kaffir corn, barley, potatoes, etc.—are not unimportant, attention will be particularly directed—firstly, to mealies, the main crop of the whole colony; and, secondly, to wheat, the main crop of what is commonly known as the conquered territory. The former are planted chiefly in October, to be harvested in April; the latter is sown from April to June, and it is reaped in December and January.

The Repatriation Department had by the end of 1902 struggled more or less successfully with the legacy immediately left by the war. Disease had been got under control;

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the town. Thirty persons were drowned, many houses were destroyed, and much property was damaged. A public funeral of the victims took place on January 19' (Parliamentary Paper, Cd. 2482). This flood, it need hardly be said, was regarded by the Boers as 'a curse from God brought by the British!' (*The Times*, August 25, 1906).

[1] 'It is a great calamity for South Africa that, after more than two years of devastating war, it should be visited by two years of agricultural loss and unfruitfulness. . . . The drought will serve a useful end, however, if it induces the South African Governments to prepare for the construction of water conservation works and irrigation on the scale which Mr. Willcocks recommended two years ago' (*Natal Mercury*, October 16, 1903).

the people had been returned to their homes; ground had been ploughed, and a fair crop had been sown. Although disquieting reports of the crop prospects had already been received from certain districts, the outlook at the opening of the new year was far from discouraging.

The stress of work did not diminish, for the Repatriation Department had by this time gained the full confidence of the Boer population, and their readiness to avail themselves of the advantages it offered developed in proportion as they realized that their earlier suspicions were unfounded. A large number, therefore, who had hitherto, for reasons best known to themselves, stood aloof, now came forward and were prepared to mortgage their lands and to sign promissory notes for larger amounts than the district commissions, knowing the value of the property and the financial position of the applicants, were in all cases willing to advance. The chief demand during this period, as during the previous one, was for live-stock and transport of all kinds.[1] On the one hand, farmers had by this time discovered that the prices asked by the department for its animals, which had previously aroused no small amount of criticism, were not exorbitant, that they were, in fact, really lower than those obtaining in the open market. On the other hand, the complaints originally raised on account of poverty and disease were no longer applicable, because the department's animals were now healthy and had enormously improved in condition. Consequently a large number of cash sales were effected, and the department could at this time have disposed of nearly all its animals had not such sales been practically confined to the agricultural classes, and had it not been obliged to keep in hand a large reserve stock in view of a possible drought.

[1] *E.g.*, 'Draught animals remain the great want of this district, and anything that can pull a plough is readily bought' (extract from Bethlehem Report).

'The demand for sheep is still very great, and I would strongly recommend that we bring in at least another 20,000 to supply the wants of farmers who are unable, owing to lack of cash, to buy elsewhere' (extract from Hoopstad Report).

'It is urgently requested that another 10,000 sheep be sent. I asked for 20,000 and have only received 7,000' (extract from Frankfort Report).

At the same time, large purchases of mixed cattle and sheep from the Cape Colony were made at headquarters by the Secretary and Assistant Secretary, who were protected in such purchases by local expert advice, and these were eagerly bought up. The district commissions also made contracts with dealers for the supply of live-stock, subject to sanction from headquarters and to approval on delivery, and in no case was there any difficulty in recovering the cost price, or did the animals distributed prove other than satisfactory.[1] Every facility was afforded to farmers who preferred to purchase on their own account, and, as the strain on the railways relaxed, it was possible to allot them a considerable number of trucks in which to bring up their stock.

The repatriation remount and cattle depots offered an infinite variety of animals, from a mule of seventeen hands, who had seen service with the Royal Field Artillery, down to the diminutive Burmese pony. There were various breeds of horses: English, Basutos, Arabs, Walers, Canadians, Russians, Argentines, and colonials. Of these, although tastes differed, the Boer showed, on the whole, a preference for English mares, and, being by nature practical, he gradually came to like the unattractive but hardy and useful Russian cobs, which he had at first despised. In the matter of cattle and sheep he was not afforded an equal choice, and he probably did not desire it, for it has been seen already that he did not take kindly to imported stock. The department, in fact, found considerable difficulty in getting rid of some imported Merino rams at any price, and eventually had to what is commonly called give them away, and even then the Boer thought we had designs upon his flock.

The repatriation stores were still the main source of supply, not only for the Boers, but for the whole population. By

[1] *E.g.*, 'A contract was entered into with Mr. ——, of this district, to deliver 2,100 oxen at £17 each. The oxen were bought in Cape Colony, and forwarded to Ladybrand in lots of from 200 to 400. All these were immediately issued to the farmers, with the exception of 660, which were transferred to other districts, in accordance with instructions received from the Assistant Secretary' (extract from Ladybrand Report).



The Repatriation Central Store at Bloemfontein.

this time they were fully stocked, and the farmer and settler could find in them not only the essentials for a veldt farm, but also a certain number of luxuries, if he was lucky enough to have the wherewithal to purchase.

The following list will give some idea of what these stores contained:

### Transport.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Cape carts. | Waggons. | Wheelbarrows. |
| Spiders. | Trolleys. | |
| Scotch carts. | Water-carts. | |

### Rations, etc.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Meat and vegetable rations. | Lard. | Brand's Essence. |
| | Arrowroot. | Soap, B.M. |
| Preserved meat. | Bovril. | Soap, carbolic. |
| Sifted meal. | Cornflour. | Bread. |
| Meal, etc. | Candles. | Benger's Food. |
| Boer meal. | Rice. | Calf's-foot jelly. |
| Biscuits. | Biltong. | Chicken. |
| Mealie meal. | Coals. | Cheese. |
| Sugar. | Pepper. | Syrup. |
| Coffee. | Pea-soup. | Maizena. |
| Tea. | Salt, coarse. | Baking-powder. |
| Jam. | Lime-juice. | Sardines. |
| Salt, fine. | Oatmeal. | Chocolate. |
| Milk. | Mellin's Food. | Matches. |
| Bacon and ham. | Moir's Jelly. | Compressed vegetables. |

### Seed, Grain, and Forage.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Potatoes. | Chaff. | Rock-salt. |
| Mealies. | Kaffir corn. | Peas. |
| Crushed mealies. | Oats. | Beans. |
| Wheat. | Compressed forage. | Linseed. |
| Barley. | Hay. | Vegetable seeds. |
| Bran. | Oat-hay. | |
| Pollard. | Lucerne. | |

### Building Material.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Galvanized iron. | Lime. | White lead. |
| Blockhouses. | Cement. | |

### Timber, etc.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Solid deals. | Locks. | Doors. |
| Ceiling boards. | Glass. | Frames and fanlights. |
| Flooring boards. | Solder. | Windows. |
| Coffin boards ($20 \times 12$). | Solder salts. | Ridging. |
| Pine boards. | Kraals. | Guttering. |
| Screws and washers. | Ladders. | Window-frames. |
| Nails. | Iron. | |
| Hinges. | Zinc. | |

### Agricultural Implements.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Harrows (various). | Ploughs (No. 75). | Ploughs (Orange D.F.). |
| Pumps (spray). | ,, (No. 19½). | ,, (S.A.). |
| ,, (wing). | ,, (Junior J.). | ,, (Bulldog). |
| ,, (horse-gear). | ,, (A.R.G. 1). | ,, (small iron). |

### Farm Requisites.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Linseed oil. | Kaffir hoes and handles. | Tanks (50 gallons). |
| Paraffin oil. | Shovels. | ,, (various). |
| Boiled oil. | Spades. | Piping (4 × 16). |
| Lard oil. | Picks. | ,, (4 × 15). |
| Jeyes' Fluid. | Rakes. | Galvanized piping, 1½. |
| Izal. | Meal-sieves. | ,, ,, ¾. |
| Dip. | Gates. | ,, ,, ½. |
| Salad oil. | Damscrapers. | ,, ,, 3. |
| Sulphur. | Weighing-machines. | Troughs (sheep). |
| Tobacco. | Branding-irons. | ,, (horse). |
| Chloride of lime. | Epsom salts. | Oil of tar. |

### Waggon Equipment.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Axles. | Tyres. | Wheels (C.C.). |
| Screw-jacks. | Spokes. | Spider shafts. |
| Whips and sticks. | Scotch cart poles. | Lubricating oils. |
| Disselbooms. | Washers. | |

### Harness, etc.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Riding-saddles. | Swingles. | Harness (single, including wheeler, leader, and C. cart). |
| Trek-chains. | Halters and head-collars. | |
| Bridles. | Reims. | Scotch cart harness. |
| Yokes. | Neck-bars. | Old harness. |
| Reins. | | |

### Harness Parts, etc.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Felt. | Twine. | Whip-thongs. |
| Canvas. | Copper wire. | Driving whips. |
| Leather (old). | Serge (C.M.). | Rings (2 inches). |
| ,, (colonial). | Flax thread. | Rivets. |
| ,, (English). | Brown hemp. | |
| Tacks. | Binding wire. | |

### Personal Requirements.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Brandy (XXX.). | Baths. | Tents (E.P.). |
| Port-wine. | Tents (bell). | |
| Mattresses. | ,, (marquee). | |

### Tools.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Masons' mallets. | Draw-knives. | Cobblers' sets. |
| Scoops. | Brushes (W.W.). | Farriers' sets. |
| Chisels. | Vices. | Turnscrews. |
| Foot-rules. | Grindstones. | Wire-cutters. |
| Reaping-hooks. | Anvils. | Planes. |
| Punches. | Clams (C.M.). | Farriers' knives. |
| Trowels. | Squares. | Pincers. |
| Box-handles. | Levels. | Set-squares. |
| Paint-brushes. | Sheep-shears. | Benches. |
| Adzes. | Portable forges. | Stocks and dies. |
| Awls. | Carpenters' sets. | Files. |

INSTRUMENTS AND CHEMICALS.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Clinical thermometers. | Trocar and cannula. | Hyd. chlor. |
| Scissors. | Scalpels. | Chloride of potash. |
| Syringes (cattle). | Mallein tubes. | Nitrate of potash. |

STABLE SUNDRIES, ETC.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Brooms. | Horse and mule shoes. | Tables. |
| Horse-brushes. | ,, ,, nails. | Paint. |
| Dandy-brushes. | Horse-rugs. | Telegraph-poles. |
| Farriers' rasps. | Jhools. | Brushes (various). |
| Horse-clippers. | Stoves. | Cupboards. |
| Broom-handles. | Copal varnish. | Jugs. |
| Curry-combs. | Japanned boxes. | Washstands. |
| Nosebags. | Leather bags. | Chairs. |
| Stable barrows. | Scales. | Basins (zinc). |
| Lanterns. | | |

But this list is really incomplete, for it does not include stumps and cork legs which were in several cases issued, to replace limbs lost during the war. For these special measurements had, of course, to be taken, and they were not, therefore, generally stocked. It is perhaps unnecessary to point out that in many more cases the special requirements of an individual were met. Thus carpenters, blacksmiths, masons, and other craftsmen were furnished with the special tools which they severally required. In one case a carpenter was literally put on his legs, or rather on two cork ones, and enabled by the supply of tools to resume his trade.

The call for tenders for the supply of seed corn issued on the declaration of peace met with no large response, because at that time there was extremely little corn in the hands of local merchants, and not one tender was received from the western side of the colony. But in Basutoland large stocks were held, and these were drawn upon very largely, and proved a most convenient source of supply for the wheat districts. The Basutos, however, are not clean sowers, and they use no modern machinery in threshing their corn. Consequently, Basutoland wheat is not only extremely dirty, but also mixed with numerous and undesirable weeds. Although Basutoland grain was sown when no other kind was available, orders were placed at an early date elsewhere.

On the advice of local millers, an attempt was made to intro-

duce for the most part a large quantity of hard kinds of wheat. The attempt was not altogether successful. The Boer proved as conservative in the seed he chose to sow as in other spheres of farming, and, unfortunately, the subsequent drought made him more chary than ever of adopting new methods. He frequently refused Red Winter No. 2, which the department imported from America, and clung fondly to his old favourite, Walla-Walla wheat. In the matter of mealies he was easier to please, for experience had shown him the value of imported grain. He readily accepted Monte Videan yellow maize, though he continually called for white 'Cango' and White Bread mealies. The latter is a prolific yielder and ripens more rapidly than any other mealie sown in the Orange River Colony, but it was during the period under consideration extremely scarce and proportionately dear. The oats issued were mainly side oats, which could be grown as a summer crop in almost every district and as a winter crop in the conquered territory. The white oats taken over from the army, although practically unknown before the war, were largely sown in several districts, and turned out fairly well under the circumstances. The greater portion of the oats grown were not threshed out, but were cut when still green and sold in bundles as oat-hay. The barley purchased was that commonly known as colonial barley, and came from the Cape Colony. Barley, again, was generally used to provide green fodder for stock. Potatoes and beans were largely issued and also vegetable seeds. Of potatoes there were several varieties, but the department confined itself in the main to the following: Early Rose, King of the Earlies, and Up-to-date. Fifty thousand packets of vegetable seeds were dealt with.

The repair of his homestead was, generally speaking, the last thing to which the Boer directed his attention, and it was not taken in hand until many months after his return—not until, in fact, the tent which the family had brought from the refugee camp began to leak or to give way. This delay in restoration was due partly to habit and partly to circum-

stances. The Boer had been accustomed before the war to live in a mud-walled hut, with which tent accommodation was found to compare very favourably. The meanness of the majority of Boer farm-houses was due to the fact that the colony was almost entirely deficient in some of the most necessary articles for the construction of dwelling-houses other than mere hovels. Trees suitable for building purposes are unknown in the Orange River Colony. Wood-work, corrugated iron, cement and lead—all had to be imported. The Boers did not hasten to thoroughly repair their homes, although in many cases a portion of the house was roofed over temporarily, or shift was made with outhouses or sheds.[1] Had they wished to do so in the first instance, it would have been impossible to satisfy their demands on account of the congestion of the railways during the months immediately succeeding the declaration of peace. With the exception of the blockhouses taken over from the military authorities, building material was not in the early days available. But by the Boers it was not immediately required. They were eminently practical, and they showed, consequently, a much keener desire to expend what money they had on the acquisition of stock, or to take their loans in cattle and sheep rather than in building material, which it was found difficult to dispose of.

'The farmers did not generally,' it was stated in a Fauresmith report, 'attempt to restore their dwellings, but converted outbuildings into living rooms. The practice of allowing families on leaving the concentration camps to take away with them the tent they had occupied was of great assistance, as such tents were in many instances the only dwellings available for many months, and in a few instances are still in use.'[2] 'Wood, doors, and zinc,' wrote the Resident

[1] 'The owner had returned, and was dwelling in a tent against the restoration of his homestead. A considerable herd of cattle grazed promiscuously on the meadow, and the farmer, with philosophic calm, was smoking his pipe in the shade. Apparently he was a man of substance and above manual toil; for though he had been back for some time, there was no sign of getting to work on repairs, such as we saw in smaller holdings' ('The African Colony').

[2] Fauresmith Report, dated November 2, 1903.

Magistrate at Senekal, 'came out from Winburg, and some farmers partially rebuilt their houses, but the majority wisely preferred to save their money to obtain stock.' 'All the homesteads still require repairs. The owners and occupiers have in part repaired some, but in many instances the farmers are still living in tents, and in the vast majority of cases the homesteads have not been rebuilt.'[1]

Drought and crop failure did not tend to improve the Boers' financial position, and the Repatriation Department, finding building material rather a drag on the market, did not purchase wood and iron to the extent originally anticipated. Under an arrangement made by the Civil Administration at the close of the war to take over all blockhouses in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony from the military, the Orange River Colony Repatriation Department purchased 1,500 blockhouses at the price of £10 each. It was found subsequently that there were over 1,800 in the colony, which reduced the purchase price to a little more than £8 apiece. The issuing price was, however, upon instructions from the Lieutenant-Governor, reduced to £5; but even at this reduced figure the supply was greater than the demand, and at the close of the department a considerable number remained unsold, or else were disposed of for any offer. In addition to the blockhouses, the department expended originally about £40,000 on imported building material; but out of £55,000 worth purchased, which included the blockhouses, buyers were only found for the purchase of wood and iron to the value of about £30,000.

Ill-fortune, however, still dogged every effort of the department to restore the country districts to their pre-war state. 'During the war,' wrote Lord Milner in a despatch dated March 14, 1903, 'the seasons on the whole were good; but this year, as bad luck would have it, there is over large tracts of both colonies, though not absolutely everywhere, a very exceptional drought. After all the strenuous efforts, alike of Government and people, to get seed into the ground, there is, I fear, a great probability, amounting in some districts to an

[1] Jacobsdal Report for March, 1903.

absolute certainty, that the crops will not ripen. At the present moment the number of people being supplied with food by the Government is comparatively small, but we have to face the contingency of seeing that number increase to a considerale extent. For this reason the Governments of both the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony are keeping a very large number of transport animals and vehicles in hand. The expense is heavy, but we have no option, as, in the absence of such provision, the people in many districts might be exposed to actual famine during 1903. This must, of course, at all hazards be guarded against, and it has been guarded against.'[1]

In tracing the course of the drought, which varied in the different districts, I shall leave the district commissions to speak for themselves. The extracts quoted are taken from the reports furnished monthly, on which the general report on the agricultural conditions of the colony and the circumstances of the farming population was based. It will be noticed that the monotony of the drought was now and again temporarily broken by hailstorms and heavy showers, and that it was accompanied by locusts, lice, caterpillars, bunt, and smut.[2]

As early as December, 1902, it was evident in many districts that the season would not be a good one. 'It is as yet too soon,' said the Bethlelem Report for that month, 'to give any estimate of the crops to be reaped. Wheat is scarce; oats,

[1] Parliamentary Paper, Cd. 1551, p. 5. 'During the war the seasons were particularly good. The peace was succeeded by an exceptional drought, which worked havoc on the veldt. In many districts there was an almost complete failure of the mealie crop sown under such difficulties. In view of possible famine, therefore, the Government has had no choice during 1903 but, at the cost of heavy expense, to keep supplies and vehicles on hand, so as to guard against any such contingency' (*Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, January 1, 1904).

[2] 'A hailstorm in South Africa is an experience. Hailstones out there have been known as big as pigeon's eggs, and I myself saw some sheets of corrugated iron roofing through which hailstones had crashed as through paper' ('A Subaltern's Letters to his Wife,' p. 21).

'The ant may modify the form of the veldt, but the locust can do more than that: it changes the colour of the ground and darkens the face of the sky. Desolation and hunger attend its steps, and man and beast alike quail at the sight of that myriad host' (*ibid.*, p. 12).

mealies, and potatoes are young. But, instead of good rain at decent intervals this season is remarkable for heavy rain, succeeded by dry weather, which continues until the crops are nearly dead, when another downpour comes.' 'Large swarms of locusts,' wrote the Resident Magistrate at Hoopstad, 'have appeared within the last few days, and it is to be feared that they will entirely destroy the crops in this district.' In the Jacobsdal district the situation was already acute: 'Owing to the continued drought the majority of the crops in this district are a failure. Several farmers have reported that their crops are utterly destroyed and their dams exhausted. Consequently, a large proportion of these families will have to be supported for a longer period than was anticipated.' From Smithfield: 'The drought still continues to be general throughout the district; locusts in large swarms are doing considerable damage to the growing crops.' 'Ploughing is still being carried on,' wrote the Resident Magistrate at Winburg, 'but, unfortunately, the greater portion of the crops put in early has utterly failed owing to the drought. We cannot hope to close our issue stores as soon as I expected, as the harvest does not promise favourably.' From Wepener: 'The crops which are now maturing have suffered considerably, both from the drought and from locusts.'

The reports for January, 1903, tell much the same tale. 'A certain amount of wheat,' wrote the Bethlehem Commission, 'has been reaped, and mealies have now become available, so that it may be expected that the quantities of food-stuffs to be issued will decrease. The drought still continues, however, and it is now certain that this district will not be able to support itself from the crops raised this season. Oxen to plough with and sheep for meat are the two great requirements.' The Ficksburg Commission 'much regrets that during the month the drought has continued very severe, and that the mealie crops have in consequence suffered very considerably. As practically all the people belonging to this district have now returned to their homes, we think it advisable to keep three waggons only for repatriation work, and to hand the balance

of the animals over to the poorer farmers for ploughing purposes.' 'The drought is becoming serious,' wrote the Resident Magistrate at Harrismith. 'Unless we have rain at an early date, the prospects of reaping any harvest will be small, and in any case no great yield can be expected.' In Rouxville farmers were 'being forced to seek grazing elsewhere.' In Edenburg 'the farmers could not plough owing to the drought.' 'No rain has fallen during the past month,' reported the chairman of the Smithfield Commission, 'and all the crops, except in cases where irrigation is possible, are a failure. Water for stock is getting scarce, and the springs are beginning to weaken.' Most districts in turn thought they had been harder hit than others. 'This district,' wrote the Resident Magistrate at Winburg, 'seems to have suffered more severely than most through the unfavourable season we have experienced. On farms on which good ploughing had been done the result is deplorable. The crops that had been doing fairly well are parched up, and the people I had hoped to assist and put on their legs by next spring are little or no better off than they were at the commencement of repatriation. They will have to look for assistance from Government for some time to come.'

The reports for February may be passed over. During March frost came to aid the other adverse elements, and by the end of that month the forecast of crop failure had been only too thoroughly verified. 'The severe frosts,' wrote the Bethlehem Commission, 'in the middle of the month did a tremendous amount of damage, killing nearly the whole of the mealie, Kaffir corn, and potato crops. The result of this is that there will not be food for the inhabitants of the district, much less for export. No ploughing has been done for wheat on account of the long-continued drought.' The Ficksburg Commission reported as follows: 'We had been hoping that a great many of the people in this district would during the winter be in a position to partly, if not altogether, support themselves. During the month, however, we have had very severe frosts, which have destroyed all growing

crops—mealies, Kaffir corn, and potatoes. This is indeed a serious matter, because a great many people, who could have shifted for themselves, will still have to look to this department for support.' From Frankfort: 'A heavy frost fell about the middle of the month, with the result that a large portion of the crops has been destroyed. It is feared that quite half the district will have to continue drawing rations.' 'The drought is very severe,' said the Edenburg report, 'and all the fountains are very weak. Water is extremely scarce, and the conductors of waggons report that they can with difficulty get water for their mules. If we do not get rain we shall not be able to plough at all this season.' Heilbron: 'The recent severe and unusually early frost has done much damage to the mealie crop, especially where sown in hollows and near spruits.' Hoopstad: 'With the exception of a very few farms, crops have, owing to the drought, become an absolute failure. Wells and springs are drying up everywhere, and farmers are trekking with their stock in all directions in search of water and pasturage. I fear that before long a large number of persons will again be on our hands for rations.' Thaba N'Chu: 'On account of the failure of the crops, I am still obliged to give rations to several persons who would otherwise have been struck off.' 'I cannot say,' wrote the Resident Magistrate at Senekal, 'that the outlook is good. The unprecedented drought in this district has absolutely ruined the mealie crop, and more rain is still required to make the present sowing a success. The cattle are poor from want of grass. I fail to see how the poor bijwoner and the Kaffirs can live if the supply of rations issued by this department is stopped.' Jacobsdal: 'Visiting commissioners report that most of the cultivation on farms has been a failure owing to the drought. Most dams and many wells are dry.'

The original intention of the Government was to close down the Repatriation Department so soon as the people had been returned to their homes and had reaped a sufficient crop to provide themselves against the future. When this had

been done it was proposed to gradually wind up the department, after supplying seed for the wheat-sowing in April, and to dispose of all stock and stores by May 31. It has been seen, however, how the crop of mealies, the staple food of the colony, failed, and how all the efforts of the department for the welfare of the people were frustrated by the refusal of Nature to play her part. In the wheat districts the seed sown in April could be reaped in the following December, but a year must elapse before another crop of mealies could be expected. The Government was, therefore, called upon to stand for another year between the people and starvation. It was felt, however, that the huge department which the work of repatriation had called into being was too large an organization for the duties of relief and cultivation which had to be taken in hand; and that, if the district commissions were to be continued, the expenses connected with relief would wellnigh equal in amount the relief itself. Some curtailment and reorganization were demanded.

The meetings of the commissions had in the previous October been confined to twice a week; they were now discontinued altogether. On April 8, 1903, circulars were sent out intimating to the local boards that the Repatriation Department under this name would cease to exist from May 1, 1903, but that the services of some of the members of the boards would be retained for the purpose of hearing claims for compensation for war losses of ex-burghers in conjunction with the Resident Magistrates.[1] From this date the Central Board resigned. The department changed its name, and assumed a title more strictly indicative of the nature of its work. It was henceforth known as the Orange River Colony Government Relief Department. It was under the entire control of the Secretary and Assistant Secretary, now known as the Director and Assistant Director, acting under the orders of the Lieutenant-Governor, who had been throughout the course of repatriation the real 'executive head' of the department, and the Colonial Secretary. The executive was cut

[1] *Vide* Appendices C. i. and C. ii., pp. 269, 270.

down as far as possible by the discharge of all employés whose services could be dispensed with.

In the districts the Resident Magistrates, whose time was now mainly taken up with their judicial duties and the examination of claims for war losses, were replaced as representatives of the department by administrators of relief. These new creations were in the majority of cases filled by officers who had previously acted as secretaries to the district commissions, and each was given one or two clerks, according to the size of his district and the amount of relief to be dispensed. The work of the new department continued to be practically on the same lines as that of its predecessor. Mortgages and loans were no longer granted, but the large quantity of stock and stores still on hand were disposed of against promissory notes on the same terms as heretofore. Considerable further purchases of live stock and seed were subsequently made, and the actual issuing operation to indigent persons continued in most districts until June 30, 1904, the severe drought and bad seasons being accountable for the prolonged existence of the department.

The new organization was comparatively simple after the experience of the previous year, and Nature was for a moment kind in giving it a start. The reports from the wheat districts during April and May were on the whole favourable, and in other districts a break in the drought enabled barley and oats to be sown. 'For the first time since the war,' the Bethlehem report stated, 'sufficient rain has fallen throughout the district. Every animal that can be utilized, no matter whether horse or mule, poor ox or cow, is being inspanned, and, instead of visiting to chew over their grievances, all the farmers are hard at work getting in wheat and oats. It is many years since these crops were so promising.' Ladybrand: 'Good rains have fallen, and everyone who has cattle and horses is ploughing or sowing. For those who have no animals our 2,600 oxen are doing splendid work, and the country begins to look more like it used to before the war.' Thaba N'Chu: 'All the people are busy ploughing, and by

the help of our animals the bijwoners are enabled to do more than their share.' Hoopstad: 'Very heavy rains have recently fallen over the whole district, and the farmers have sown barley and oats on a large scale.'

But wheat is not grown to any large extent in the greater portion of the Orange River Colony, and even where it could be planted experience had recently shown that sowing and reaping were two different things. When the seed had been put in, it demanded no further attention until the crop began to ripen. In some districts there had been no break in the drought and no farm-work at all could be done. From roughly the beginning of June until the end of September is a dead season. With the close of the wheat-sowing and the approach of winter, therefore, attention was directed to the relief works as a possible means of curtailing the ration list.

The organization of these relief works has been described in another chapter. Their main object was to provide work for those of the indigent bijwoners who could not be repatriated, owing to the refusal of the landowners to take them back on to their farms. This object had to some extent been achieved, and some 1,500 men with their families were employed in the relief camps. It was now thought that the system of relief works might be applied, temporarily anyhow, to the larger class of bijwoners who had been repatriated but whose crops had failed. The inducements offered were sufficiently attractive, and would have undoubtedly appealed to any but a comparatively worthless class of men. The camps had been excellently organized, and were practically self-contained. Temporary buildings had been built in each camp to serve as church, hospital, and school. Rations were not issued (except in hospital), but all provisions and necessaries could be purchased at regulation prices at the camp store. Medical attendance was free, and young women were employed as probationer nurses in the hospital. The older women and boys were given employment according to their capacities. The daily wage fixed for an ordinary labourer was 4s. 6d. for an eight hours day, but keen-witted men could earn up to

7s. 6d. per diem as gangers or time-keepers. From many points of view an existence superior to, and more independent than, that of a squatter at will was here afforded. The whole family could work and earn money, and it was offered conveyance free of cost to the scene of its labours.

From what has been already said, however, in connection with the bijwoner problem, the difficulties of extending the relief works scheme to the larger class of what may be called temporary indigents proved to be considerable. It is indeed true that a few able-bodied men, when refused rations by the Government Relief Department, consented to be taken to the relief camps.[1] But in the vast majority of cases they distinctly refused to leave their farms, and preferred to lead an indolent hand-to-mouth existence rather than accept regular employment. 'When I stopped issuing rations to able-bodied men,' wrote the Resident Magistrate at Boshof, 'and informed them that they would have to go to the relief works, the applicants, with one or two exceptions, all remained in the district and made no further appeals.' In the Smithfield district the bijwoners declared that they 'would rather starve than enter the relief camps.' 'The burghers do not remain,' a Heilbron report stated, 'for any length of time at the relief works; they return home on various pretexts—to hear about their claims, to see to their crops or sheep.'

Various excuses were made. Lying at the root of all, although not generally admitted, was undoubtedly the distaste for and prejudice against manual labour. The attitude of the special class under consideration was easier to understand than to defend. There was everywhere manifest a strong disinclination on the part of men to leave their own districts, and this disinclination was in several instances countenanced by the Resident Magistrates who were best acquainted with local conditions and individual circumstances. It must be remembered that the poorest bijwoner was not

[1] 'It was no use people remaining on their farms doing nothing for crops that refused to grow, so daily men started for the relief works at Mushroom Valley' (extract from Senekal Report).

a pauper in the ordinary sense of the word. His possessions were not, indeed, extensive, and, squatter at will as he was, he was entirely under the thumb of the landowner on whose farm he was permitted to reside. But he had a piece of ground in which he was interested, and, possibly, what little energy he possessed was more profitably expended on the cultivation of that ground than employed on work in which he had no stake. The bijwoner, although he had never done much, and although he could now do nothing on it, was passionately attached to his little bit of soil. At this time he was, save for his Government rations, practically on the verge of starvation, and he had nothing wherewith to purchase the ordinary necessaries of life. But he knew the uncertainties of the South African climate, and he was content even in mid-winter to study the face of the heavens for a cloud whose appearance was only remotely possible, rather than pull himself together and emigrate to the relief camp.[1] He was not prepared to travel even at Government expense out of his district to obtain work, when at any moment a fall of rain might recall him to his farm. It was through no fault of their own and through no fault of the department that the bijwoners found themselves at this period in so critical a situation. All human effort had failed simply because Nature had not been kind. Every preparation had been made for ploughing and sowing in the spring, and the bijwoner pleaded to be given one more chance. Whether wise or not, that chance was given, and relief was extended pending the next mealie crop, which was to be sown in the following October. Men were not compelled to go to the relief works.

From a moral and educational standpoint the relief works undoubtedly possessed a distinct advantage, but practically the policy of supporting people on their farms was not more expensive than that of giving them employment. In the one

[1] 'The farmers and Kaffirs are anxiously watching the skies for the signs of rain, and as day after day slips by and no rain falls they are beginning to lose heart' (*Globe*). The average rainfall for the winter months in ordinary seasons was: May, 1·01 inches; June, 0·55 inch; July, 0·45; August, 0·64.

case the cost per head was 1s. a day; in the other the labourer was paid 4s. 6d. per diem, in addition to the cost of accommodation and equipment. For sheer hard, unskilled labour, the black man is in South Africa not only cheaper than, but superior to, the bijwoner. The Boer inmates of the relief camps seldom succeeded in earning the respectable wages given them. Possibly the Government, in seeking measures of relief and means of developing the country, might have more profitably employed its funds in boring for water in arid districts, and supplying drills for the purpose at a small cost, than in following out a scheme for the construction of gigantic dams at ruinous expense.[1]

Nothing could be done during the winter, and in spite of the advent of spring the drought continued, and the wheat crop failed. The gloom of the agricultural outlook was strongly emphasized in the district reports for the month of September, 1903.

'The protracted drought,' wrote the administrator of relief for the Bloemfontein district, 'is likely to be the cause of much anxiety, and to necessitate the prolongation of relief work. Last season was a bad one, and its consequences were felt by the Repatriation Department. That a bad season should be followed by what promises to be one of the severest droughts which this country has ever experienced is a disaster that is likely to frustrate all the past efforts of the Government in repatriating farmers. Not only will the farmers be unable to plough, but the absence of water and grass throughout the district is already causing serious loss to stock-breeders, and many men, who have only been able to get together on credit a few head of cattle, will, unless the present prospects alter considerably, shortly find themselves in a worse position than they were in at the conclusion of hostili-

[1] 'Irrigation is necessary on a certain scale, for a reason which we shall discuss later, and in many cases it could be effected at a moderate cost. But expensive irrigation works for agriculture alone are, I believe, of doubtful wisdom in almost every part of the country. What is of infinitely greater importance is the procuring of water in the dry tracts by tanks, wells, and, if possible, by artesian bores' ('The African Colony,' p. 263).

ties. The only remedies suggested are the speedy payment of compensation and the provision of more water-finding machinery.' In the Fauresmith district 'the dams were all dry, and in many places water had to be hauled from wells to water the stock.' 'Everything now is burnt up,' said the Ficksburg report, 'and those who have put their all into the land are bound to require additional assistance before long.' From Ladybrand and Thaba N'Chu: 'The whole of the wheat crop has gone practically, and should rain fall even now the seed sown will certainly not be recovered. The outlook is serious. Both the settlers and farmers have risked all they possessed, with the result that they will get nothing in return.' 'The past year was a trying one,' the Rouxville report stated, 'but this year has proved to be more severe, and, failure following failure, has put the farmer back into much the same position as when he started. Extensive cultivation has been carried on in the district, but, owing to the prolonged drought, all these lands must be reploughed and seed mealies substituted.' The administrator of relief for the Smithfield district reported: 'The general drought continues. No rain has fallen since May. Many of the farms have now barely sufficient water for drinking purposes. The wheat crop will be a total failure. There are at present thirty ploughing teams in the district, but, owing to the drought, everything from an agricultural point of view is practically at a standstill.' From Vredefort: 'The drought continues. The district throughout is completely parched, and stock find it difficult to live.' From Wepener: 'Owing to the failure of the wheat crop, I fear distress in this district will be greatly increased during the next few months.' 'The general outlook,' the Winburg report stated, 'is very gloomy and discouraging. Although live-stock of all kinds is prospering fairly well, and the lambing season for repatriation sheep and goats has been all that could be desired, the agricultural part of farming threatens to be a total failure owing to the drought.'

The foregoing extracts were backed up in each case by special reports on individual farms. Both the Resident Magis-

trates and the administrators of relief had previously been instructed to tour their districts in order to see the effect of the drought on the spot, and to make themselves more fully acquainted with the requirements of particular families.

While the miserable situation of the bijwoner remained stationary, that of the landowner grew worse, for he had to support his native employés.[1] The wheat crop failed in Basutoland, as elsewhere, and the Caledon River ran dry, for the first time within the memory of man. Native labour was required on the railway construction works in different parts of the colony, but the natives could not be spared from the farms. They had come to the end of their war earnings, had expended the money paid out to them against their military receipts, and were now suffering great hardships. 'Reports are reaching me,' wrote the administrator of relief for the Lindley district in his September report, 'that large numbers of natives in this district are without food to supply their wants. I shall require at least 700 bags of mealies. I have already issued 180 bags on the security of the employers.' The natives had, of course, been allowed throughout to purchase for cash. Food and seed were now issued to those unable to pay, but their employers were called upon to stand security for payment when crops should be reaped.[2]

[1] 'And it is not only the bijwoner class who feel the pinch. I think that perhaps the landowners feel the hard times more. Those people who before the war had the reputation of being well-to-do still have the name, but not the means; and to them flock all poor neighbours, and expect help. Government and everybody help the "poor" man, but the landed proprietor ought to be a man of means, and is expected to lend and give to everybody else. And if you come to the truth of his case, you find that he is worse off than perhaps his own bijwoner. He has only his ground, which he has to mortgage to get the means to live decently, and to give all that is required of him. He not only must help his bijwoners, but provide for the natives living on his farm. These poor creatures are truly to be pitied. Government has paid out most of their receipts, but how far can those few pounds go? And many there are who had no receipts, and their mealies failed last season; so what is to be done unless the "Baas" gives food (luckily the Kaffir wears next to no clothing)? The "Baas" cannot send his "boys" to go and earn wages elsewhere, as he needs their services on the farm, and so is obliged to feed, not only his Kaffirs, but also their families, and very often one Kaffir has two or three households' (*South African News*, November 4, 1903).

[2] See Appendix D, p. 272.

The agricultural was not the only class affected by these bad seasons. The industrial stagnation had deepened month after month. Agricultural failure struck at the very root of the colony's prosperity, and every branch of trade suffered in consequence. Owing to the heavy stocks on hand, and to the reduction in the purchasing power of the community on account of the reasons already given, there was a general depression in trade, the closing of several places of business, and a marked decrease in imports. The farmers were unable to purchase from the storekeepers, and the latter could not give orders to the merchants at the seaports. Both merchants and storekeepers were overstocked. The military were at this time disposing of large stocks of surplus provisions, chiefly tinned goods, at the best prices obtainable, and the merchants found it impossible to compete with them. Most people had money locked up in shares, which they could not realize on account of the depression in the share market.

It will perhaps be evident that, although destitution properly so called was conspicuous by its absence, there was a considerable amount of distress at this time among all classes of the community. It was a most natural outcome of the ravages of war and the long-protracted drought that poverty should be felt all over the colony. Some distress was inevitable, and it was due to circumstances which could not be foreseen or controlled. It was equally evident, however, that the department had done, and was still doing, all in its power to cope with the difficulties of the time, and that it had made every effort not only to discover where distress existed, but to alleviate such distress when the discovery had been made.[1]

The difficulties surrounding the work of relief were exaggerated in South Africa by the existence of the bijwoner class, the status and characteristics of which have been suffi-

[1] 'To realize how much has been done in the direction of equipping the Boers to meet the unavoidable privation of the past season, we must consider how terrible would be their situation to-day had they simply been put back after the war upon a ravaged and naked territory, and without any of the aid which has been bestowed upon them' (*African World*, September 19, 1903).

ciently explained. In South Africa, as in every other country, there was a lazy poor class as well as a lazy rich class. The class of man who has never worked during the course of his existence, and never will if he can possibly avoid it, is to be found everywhere, and it is a class with which the world has not yet learned to deal. The habitual loafer, the clog on the wheel of progress, the drone of life, is wonderfully cosmopolitan. There exists a class of men, although it is perhaps comparatively less numerous in South Africa than elsewhere, who cannot, humanly speaking, under any circumstances be brought to work. The class of incurable idlers is not large in the Orange River Colony, but it exists, and as long as it exists destitution will exist. By the institution of relief works and the curtailment of the free ration list the Government had made an honest endeavour to deal with idlers. The scheme was worth a trial, because that trial broke new ground. To say that it failed is merely to point out that the character of the idler is much the same in the Orange River Colony as in other parts of the globe. But the idlers may be left out of the account.

There was a larger class of men who were anxious to work, but in their own way. Here, again, the department had done its utmost. Finding that it was impossible to reverse a life's order—in other words, to convert the agriculturist into a navvy or an artisan—every effort was made to assist the people to help themselves in their own way by working on their own land.[1] Whether the true interests of the colony were served in thus bolstering up the bijwoner class is a wider issue, and is not here in question. The Government relief was a purely temporary department, formed with the object of helping the people to tide over their immediate difficulties, and questions of future policy did not properly fall within its scope. Its

[1] In some districts the administrators went even further. 'I am endeavouring as far as possible to bring the employer of labour and the unemployed together by means of the ploughing conductor, who inquires from farm to farm what white labour is required and what wages are offered. Applicants for assistance are then referred to those who require their services. Several landless families have been placed in this way' (extract from Kroonstad District Report). See also Appendix D., p. 272.

action was consequently limited to the immediate needs of the agricultural population, and to aiding that population to work out its own salvation in its own particular way. The distress was not acute, and every endeavour had been, and was still being, made to meet it; it was due to natural causes, and not to any neglect on the part of the Government. In fact, the solicitude of the Government for the people's welfare was, if anything, excessive, and, like the monasteries of the Middle Ages, it ran the risk of creating the poverty which it sought to relieve.

The situation was admittedly sufficiently serious, but not bad enough to satisfy certain critics of the administration both in South Africa and at home, who were anxious to lose no opportunity of ascribing some fresh calamity to the policy of the Government. They consequently embarked on a campaign of misrepresentation, with the object of keeping alive racial feeling, and disparaging the Repatriation and Government Relief Departments. General Louis Botha set rolling the ball of discontent by addressing to Lord Courtney, who took care to have it published in *The Times*, a letter in which repatriation was described as 'a complete and dismal failure.'[1] This was followed by a series of harrowing letters contributed to the *Manchester Guardian* by Miss Emily Hobhouse.[2] The cry was taken up, not only by certain sections of

[1] *The Times*, July 15, 1903. 'The hand may be the hand of Louis Botha, but the voice sounds like the voice of our own little Bethels obediently echoed back from the veldt' (*ibid.*).

[2] 'A week or two ago Miss Hobhouse showed premonitory symptoms of an outbreak of Anglophobia in a letter published in the *Manchester Guardian*, one of the few provincial papers of standing which maintained an ultra Pro-Boer attitude from the beginning to the end of the war. Sequential effects are seen this week in the appearance in the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Daily News* of a whole batch of letters from Miss Hobhouse, in which she tries to rend our hearts with what she imagines to be piteous stories of Boer suffering and British callousness. . . . These letters were not originally written for publication—oh dear no! A lady of such a retiring disposition as Miss Emily Hobhouse would not dream of seeking publicity for the wails of her friends; besides, is it not preposterous to suppose that, desiring publication, she should write to members of the South African Distress Relief Committee, also very retiring, when there is a chance of inducing their dear old friends the *Daily News* and the *Manchester Guardian* to publish stories of alleged Boer suffering? Clearly

the Pro-Boer press at home, but also by the Bond party in the Cape House of Assembly.

These critics did not hesitate to part company with truth in drawing vivid pictures of universal destitution which they ascribed to official ineptitude and to the maladministration of the relief funds granted under the Terms of Vereeniging. Their whole motive was clearly political—an endeavour to keep alive racial antagonism in South Africa and to resuscitate Pro-Boerism at home. In the Orange River Colony the move was not successful, because it was well known to be based on untruth, and its object was too apparent; in England and on the Continent it served to create a false impression.[1]

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it is absurd to suppose that the letters were ever intended to reach the public eye! No doubt Miss Hobhouse will be very angry with Lady Hobhouse for having sent them to the press, especially as it is by no means the first occasion on which she has offended in this way' (*Birmingham Daily Mail*, September 2, 1903).

[1] 'The story originated by Miss Hobhouse respecting the alleged "terrible distress" in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony has met with prompt and indignant refutation. So far as can be ascertained, anything resembling poverty, as it is understood in England, is very rare amongst the Boers of whom Miss Hobhouse writes and Mr. Merriman speaks. Men and women are not shelterless, neither do they lack a sufficiency of the necessaries of life. The poorest are cared for, supplied with food, building materials, seeds, clothing—everything, in short, that they can possibly require, and no genuine case of distress is allowed to go unrelieved. Able-bodied men can procure employment at relief works at a living wage; and in many districts there is an actual dearth of white labour, for which high rates of pay are offered. The suggestion, not too delicately conveyed, that many people in the Orange River Colony are destitute is hotly resented by the people themselves. They are nothing of the kind. They are for the most part working hard, maintaining themselves by honest and sustained effort, and we can only sympathize with them in the indignation with which they have repudiated the accusation of pauperism. The people who are working the agitation are not prompted by any sort of regard for those whose imaginary sufferings they pretend to pity. They are animated solely by a desire to foster racial hatred, and to delay that real union of interests between the British and the Boers which alone is wanted to insure the prosperity of South Africa. As Sir Lewis Michell indicated in a speech which we reproduce in another column, they enlisted the sympathies of the Cape Parliament by false pretences, with the result that "the poor distressed people" of the Orange River Colony told the Cape House of Assembly to mind its own business. Misrepresentation could not have gone further, but it has fortunately resulted in the complete discomfiture of those who initiated it' (*South Africa*, September 19, 1903).

'Je ne sais si l'Angleterre a tenu toutes les promesses qu'elle leur a

In considering the statements of critics of this kind it is well to bear in mind their antecedents, in order to decide whether the allegations are impartial and made by unprejudiced observers, or whether they are something different. Miss Hobhouse was a very well-meaning, very susceptible, but very misguided lady, who had gained an unenviable notoriety during the war in connection with the concentration camps. The egregiously misleading statements with regard to the working of those camps which her so-called enthusiasm for the Boers prompted her to make induced the authorities—rightly, in the opinion of most South Africans—on the occasion of a second visit to prevent her landing. She retired, imbued apparently with the determination to be even with the Government later on. She came out a third time, with the object, more or less avowed, of showing up the administration. Her statements were calculated to do a vast amount of mischief, but they may possibly be partly ascribed to ignorance.

The following are taken merely as specimens of untruth from a letter addressed by Miss Hobhouse to the *South African News*: 'Throughout Frankfort, Reitz, Lindley, Heilbron, and other parts, people are starving indeed. . . . Oxen were scarce, so in many cases women and children were yoked to the plough. . . . On June 1 the Repatriation Boards closed their food-supplies, except for cash payments. . . . Men tramp hither and thither in search of work, which is rarely to be found. . . . The very existence of these relief camps is an outward and visible sign of the failure to repatriate the people. . . . Only in rare instances have military receipts been paid, and compensation is but a ghostly shadow in a future which never draws near.' And Miss Hobhouse was kind enough to suggest what form relief might take. 'There are two ways,' she wrote, 'in which to give help. Money for a sufficient supply of meal to maintain life until the Govern-

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faites; mais leurs souffrances restent grandes comme le montrent les extraits de lettres que j'ai reçues d'une noble femme, une Anglaise désireuse de réparer les maux faits par la politique conquérante de son pays' (*L'Européen*, October 17, 1903).

ment undertakes the duty, and further help devoted to a plan for rekindling hope. It is proposed—and we hope to work it in some places—to purchase a team of mules or oxen, a "charity" team, which shall go in turn from farm to farm, ploughing for all—and they are many—who have no animals.'

The unbiassed reader who has borne with me thus far may be relied upon to refute these misrepresentations from what he has already read. Their most extraordinary characteristic was, however, that they displayed an absolute ignorance of local conditions, although Miss Hobhouse alleges that she travelled far and wide to collect them.[1] Some of the statements will be briefly examined. With regard to the universal destitution and general starvation, the following list gives some of the issues made by the department up to June 30, 1903: Live stock to the value of £800,000; building material, £29,000; seed, etc., £120,000; rations, £200,000. To illustrate issues made during the year in particular districts, the following is taken from the Bethlehem Report for June, 1903: 'Horses, 508; mules, 178; oxen, 774; mixed cattle, 512; sheep and goats, 5,906; waggons and trolleys, 45; harness, 459 sets; galvanized iron, 17,154 feet; flooring, 12,000 feet; ceiling, 12,000 feet; deals, 2,800 feet; blockhouses, 227; seed wheat, 124 bags; oats, 311,000 pounds; potatoes, 663 cases and 169 bags; meat, 263,529½ pounds; flour and meal, 269,561 pounds; biscuits, 94,229½ pounds; cash loans amounting to £4,792 11s. 1d.' The Bethlehem Report has been quoted because it contains Reitz, given in the list of Miss Hobhouse's starving districts.[2]

[1] 'The story of the farmer who walked to a village to buy cattle, and slept on the veldt because he could not afford a bed, is perhaps the most absurd of the Hobhouse legends: for a bed in the village and breakfast, or at least coffee and a roll, could have been obtained for something varying from 1s. 6d. to 2s. And here was a man prepared to buy cattle at certainly from £6 to £12 per beast, according to age' (Kimberley correspondent to the *Western Morning News*, November 5, 1903).

[2] 'A correspondent, writing to the *Cape Times* from Bethlehem, Orange River Colony, joins in exposing the extraordinary misrepresentations of Miss Hobhouse. That romantic lady asserted that "the Repatriation Boards closed their food-supplies except for cash payments." "Absolutely

The wish is ofttimes father to the thought. The following extract from a private letter addressed to the author by the Resident Magistrate at Lindley, an ex-Landdrost of the Free State Government, will serve to illustrate Miss Hobhouse's mode of action, and to indicate what she was prepared to believe and what she was not:[1] 'I am amused,' he wrote, 'or rather disgusted, to see Miss Hobhouse's pathetic letter in the *South African News*. I had the honour of meeting this good lady on the market square one Sunday morning, and we had a short conversation. When I told her that about 1,000 mouths were fed in June and about 700 in July, she replied, "Yes, for cash." I told her that not a penny in cash had been received for rations. She apparently doubted my word, for in her letter she stated that the department had stopped the supply of rations since June 1.' In Frankfort and Lindley necessitous cases were frequent, and before the end of 1902 clothes and blankets to the value of £300 had been distributed gratis in those districts. These issues, as in so many other instances, were made to meet special cases, and were exceptions to the general policy of the department. For all issues personal receipts had been taken, in accordance with Lord Milner's instructions, and the

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untrue," says this correspondent, "Every Repatriation Board in the colony is still issuing food as before—on loan." "Men tramp hither and thither in search of work, which is rarely to be found," said Miss Hobhouse. "For one whole month," retorts this correspondent, "a list of persons willing to work on railways or other relief works was kept, and every individual coming to draw rations was asked if he was willing to accept work. Practically half the district was then drawing rations, yet only three men out of the whole lot were found willing to work." This correspondent expresses his astonishment that in the whole description of this supposed wretchedness not a word was said by this lady agitator in favour of the natives. "More than £20,000 was paid to Boers in this district alone, whilst native receipts are only to be paid in a few days' time"' (*African Review*, September 26, 1903).

[1] 'Fortunately there is little chance of the public rising to the bait. The letters are too transparently those of a credulous lady who went forth to discover evidence of Boer suffering and hardship, and who was too ready to believe anything that a Boer with a grievance cared to tell her. Her attitude of mind is very curiously indicated in one little sentence. "The clergyman and I," she says, "have been round together seeing some of the worst cases." It was the worst cases she sought out and the worst cases she wanted to see' (*Birmingham Daily Mail*, September 2, 1903).

Boer perfectly understood by this time why this course had been adopted.[1]

On June 1, 1903, the Repatriation Boards had ceased to exist, and they therefore could not 'close their food-supplies.' The administrative change from repatriation to relief dated from May 1. The Boer's worst enemy would never accuse him of 'tramping': distances on the veldt are too great. Waggons were supplied free to all who wished to go to the relief camps. Work outside those camps was plentiful in every district.[2] The Relief Works Department and the Repatriation Department were started within a month of each other, and the former could hardly be regarded as 'an outward and visible sign' of the failure of the latter. Between May 23 and August 24 the sum of £241,037 12s. 1d. was paid out against military receipts in the Orange River Colony, and commissions in every district were hard at work examining claims for war losses. Miss Hobhouse quoted in her letters several instances of payment being refused or only partly made. The obvious inference is that the claimants were capable of misrepresenting facts, although not probably to the same extent as Miss Hobhouse herself. Miss Hobhouse's idea of a 'charity team, which should go in turn

[1] 'There is no question of repayment in the sense of their having to take money out of their own pockets hereafter. The only repayment which can take place is that the Government, if it assists them now, will to that extent not give them the assistance a second time later. The money now given to them will not be repayable except out of other money, if any, subsequently payable to them by the Government out of the £3,000,000' (letter dated July 25, 1902).

'It was impossible to assess straight away the amount of the losses incurred by each applicant. It was equally impossible to admit as definitely established the claims put in by each applicant. In these circumstances the only feasible plan was to take receipts from every person to whom assistance was given, and to keep an account which should be balanced as far as possible after the completion of the total assessment of losses' (*The Times*, July 15, 1903).

The final distribution of the free grant was based practically on the assessed claims of *all* ex-burghers, whether destitute or not.

[2] *E.g.*, 'For several months prior to July the South African Constabulary offered work in connection with the destruction of burrweed and Scotch thistle to any man, woman, or child on the farms next to the one they were living on, but only succeeded in getting six people to work, though wages of 4s. 6d. a day for a man, and for women and children in proportion, were offered' (Jacobsdal District Report).

from farm to farm, ploughing for all,' was an excellent one, but not quite original. The department, it has been seen, had had hundreds of charity teams ploughing throughout the colony for more than a year. In the Heilbron district, to take another of the districts quoted by Miss Hobhouse, there were 500 of the department's mules devoted solely to ploughing at the time she wrote. The department was very far from perfect, and some of its imperfections will be dealt with later on, but it was not open to the charges which Miss Hobhouse in her ignorance thought fit to bring against it.

The Hobhouse letters, written in a style to appeal to the modern taste for sensationalism, were widely circulated throughout the Empire,[1] and indignant pressmen did not fail to exaggerate the vivid and harrowing picture already drawn. 'They show,' to quote but one instance, 'that the population remaining upon the farms throughout the ravaged country is being systematically left to die of starvation.'[2] The Boer Relief Committee in the Cape Colony at once took the matter up, and the subject of general destitution and starvation in 'the northern colonies' was introduced by the Bond party into the Cape parliament.

The Cape Colony, or rather the anti-British portion of it, showed a keen desire to play the part of the good Samaritan; but, unfortunately, it was reminded that charity should begin at home: its attention was directed to the prevalence in its own midst of distress acuter than that alleged to exist elsewhere.[3]

[1] For instance, they will be found quoted in the *Allahabad Pioneer* for October 29, 1903.

[2] *Investor's Review*, October 10, 1903.

'One of the organs so willing to place her hysterical wailings before the public gloats over the "spectacle of black ruin and misery," of which she is said to have been a witness, and speaks of this as a "necessary consequence of a war barbarously waged." Evidently it is now considered to be less risky than when Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman committed his famous "indiscretion" to accuse one's own country and one's own soldiers of discreditable conduct' (*Birmingham Daily Mail*, September 2, 1903).

'In some cases farmers seemed to have been "starved out" of the colonies' (*Morning Leader*, September 11, 1903).

[3] 'Distressing accounts have been received from Carnarvon and the neighbouring districts about the state of the population. Stocks are depleted, and many families are starving. An insistent demand is being made on the Government to send prompt supplies of food-stuffs and

The people of the Orange River Colony, naturally indignant at being regarded as paupers, politely requested the Cape to mind its own business. A Government inquiry was instituted, and not one case of acute distress could be found. The Government report was naturally discredited by its opponents.[1] The Orange River Colony press, however, sent special commissioners to travel round the country districts, and the reports they furnished corroborated exactly that already issued by the Government. Not one single case of acute distress could be found.[2] As a matter of fact, all the reports furnished both for and against the Government were to this extent incorrect—that acute distress did exist among the native population, and in about a dozen cases natives were found to be living on roots and vermin. Poverty is not always self-assertive, and the South African natives are peculiarly reticent when in trouble. As soon as cases of want among the blacks were discovered by the district administrators on tour, they were immediately relieved.

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medicines. After the interference of the Cape Parliament with the Transvaal and Orangia, the present revelations of unrelieved distress in this colony create an unpleasant impression' (*Standard*, November 24, 1903).

'The Government of the Orange River Colony have dealt with the allegations made in the Cape Parliament as to great distress among the Dutch population by instituting a series of inquiries, with the result that the allegations have been found to be based on no surer foundation than Miss Hobhouse's tales of dire poverty. . . . The members of the Cape Parliament would be better employed in looking after the "poor whites" in their own colony than in making exaggerated statements concerning another' (*Natal Mercury*, September 18, 1903).

[1] 'We have to thank the Government of the Orange River Colony for courteously sending us a copy of the *Government Gazette*, containing a summary of the reports received from Resident Magistrates in reply to a telegram from the Lieutenant-Governor asking for "a report on the condition of each district, stating if any general destitution exists in any part of it." The magistrates were instructed if necessary to institute special inquiries through the South African Constabulary, Special Justices of the Peace, and otherwise. Considering the importance of the subject, we should have been glad to see the full reports, including the signatures. . . . In general, we should say that Magistrates would be the very last persons to hear of distress, the last but them would be Special Justices of the Peace, and the next last would be the officers and men of the Constabulary' (*South African News*, September 23, 1903).

[2] 'Exhaustive inquiries made by travelling commissioners of the *Bloemfontein Post* failed to find a single case of unrelieved white distress' (*African Review*, September 26, 1903).

Towards the end of October, 1903, the drought broke, and rain fell from as far north as Rhodesia to the southern districts of the Cape Colony. The simultaneousness of this meteorological change over so vast an area was generally declared to be just as remarkable as the unprecented drought which it succeeded. Whether remarkable or not, rain certainly arrived at a most opportune moment. It washed away the lice which had attacked the wheat, and enabled farmers in the conquered territory in some cases to save a quarter of their crops, and in others to recover the seed sown. The damage done to the country by the drought had been enormous, but the strain was now past and ploughing and sowing for the mealie crop could be resumed. The Cape Colonial farmers who had trekked with their stock into the Orange River Colony from the Karoo in quest of grazing and water were now able to return.

In the Orange River Colony itself, however, the rainfall was still almost as fitful as it had been during the previous year. A line drawn roughly from Boshof, in the north-west of the colony, to Zastron, in the south-east, would seem to mark a climatic division. During the two years of repatriation and relief it was invariably found that the districts to the north-east of this line received double the quantity of rain which fell to the south-west of it. Consequently, the reports of weather and crop prospects received from the different districts varied considerably. While during October, for instance, Vredefort reported that 'ploughing was in full swing,' and Wepener stated that 'fair rains fell just in time to save a portion of the wheat crop, and so to ward off the acuteness of the threatened distress,' the administrator of relief at Fauresmith had to increase his ration list 'as the effects of the prolonged drought made themselves more and more felt,' and Rouxville feared that 'ploughing for the mealie crop would be impossible.' Generally speaking, however, with three exceptions—Edenburg, Fauresmith, and Rouxville—sufficient rain fell in all districts during November and December, 1903, to enable more land to be broken up than ever before, and a

larger crop of mealies to be sown than had ever been previously known. At the same time, the ration list had to be increased, owing to the arrival of the ploughing season, and the consequent return of those bijwoners who had gone temporarily to the relief camps.

In tracing the gradual improvement outlined, I shall again draw freely on the district reports, because they will give, I feel, a better idea of local conditions than any summary which I might make. The following are extracts from some of these reports for November, 1903. Bethlelem: 'The issue of foodstuffs materially increased during the past month, but it is now fairly certain that the worst is past, and before my next report the wheat harvest will have commenced. In some instances the issue of rations was made conditional upon one or more of the family obtaining work, and it was strange to see how several, who were living in Reitz and had been unable to get work before, within twenty-four hours obtained employment quarrying stone.' Ficksburg: 'During the month the number of persons drawing rations has increased from about 300 to 600. A portion of the wheat crop has, however, been saved.' Heilbron: 'During the month the burghers have continued to return to their farms from the Parijs relief works to proceed with ploughing and sowing. It has, therefore, been found necessary to issue rations to them on an increased scale whilst they are so employed.'

The December reports in most cases marked distinct progress. Bethlehem: 'You will note the decrease in issues since November, and there is every prospect of these being now reduced, until only those who will be a permanent charge on the Government will be receiving assistance. Copious rains have repeatedly fallen throughout the district, and from personal observation I can say that, so far as the wheat crop is concerned, there is already sufficient wheat stacked to provide for this district, and by the time it is all reaped, there will be a considerable surplus for others. Free ploughing and free seed have again been very keenly appreciated, and the mealie crop is most promising.' Ladybrand has hitherto been

regarded as the richest district in the Orange River Colony, and this is probably due to a fair sprinkling of progressive farmers, chiefly of British descent. But Bethlehem bids fair to outstrip Ladybrand in agricultural wealth in the very near future, and a close runner up to both of these will probably be little Ficksburg, the smallest district in the colony, possessing the prettiest of the provincial towns with one exception—Parijs, on the Vaal River.

Not every district report was as favourable as that received from Bethlehem, and in many cases where crops promised well they had been partially destroyed by hail and visited by locusts and other pests. Harrismith: 'Large quantities of crops have been destroyed by hail, also a considerable number of goats and pigs.' Wepener: 'Flying locusts have, I regret to report, made their appearance in this district and destroyed many crops.' Frankfort: 'The crops are good, but early mealies are suffering from a grub known by local people as "rupsen."' Vrede: 'A disease of a very bad nature has appeared in several places amongst the mealie crops, some of which are absolutely alive with worms. I have seen and inspected some myself, and found as many as a dozen large worms in a single pod. Farmers here attribute this to the drought, and to the fact that the seed was put into the ground too soon after the ploughing.'

In several of the southern districts the rain came so late that only a few farmers were able to plough and sow at all, and locusts in some cases destroyed what little was sown. The reports from Edenburg and Fauresmith disclosed little or no improvement. Edenburg: 'There has been little rain. The crop prospects are bad. Water is still scarce, and some farmers have great difficulty in getting sufficient for drinking purposes. Locusts in the hopper stage have made their appearance.' Fauresmith: 'There have been only a few purely local showers. The crop prospects, with the exception of potatoes, are very small. Distress is increasing for three reasons. Colonial farmers who have been in the district grazing sheep are now returning. As time goes on and the

soil remains unproductive, more and more people get to the end of their finances. The Jagersfontein Mine is not employing as many men as heretofore. One reason for my large ration issues this month—25,000 pounds of meat and 25,000 pounds of meal—is that the local storekeepers can no longer afford to give credit. Previously well-to-do farmers are therefore obliged to appeal to the department. I do not see that even the payment of compensation will materially affect the state of affairs, as in most cases when the recipient has paid his debts he will be left nearly, if not quite, as badly off as at present. Many men still have debts contracted before the war.'

From September to June the plough in the Orange River Colony is never idle during anything approaching an ordinary season. Even in districts where little rain fell the large number of animals which the department had distributed enabled the farmers to take every advantage of the slightest showers, and it was not surprising, therefore, that with free issues of seed the people managed, in spite of difficulties, to get some sort of a crop into the ground. The peculiar nature of the drought and the eccentricities of the rainfall, which have been previously referred to, must still be borne in mind. A record mealie crop was reaped in several districts in the beginning of 1904, but this was due not so much to any particularly favourable season or to an exceptional yield, as to the fact that an unprecedented area had been ploughed and sown. In the less favoured districts the people gradually managed, getting a little return from one crop and another, by hook or by crook, and chiefly with the assistance afforded by the department, to regain in a measure their self-support.

With the reaping of the mealie crop the Government rightly felt that the time had at length come when the Relief Department might fitly be closed down. Since the beginning of the year the department had been gradually reducing by auction sales and otherwise its surplus stocks and stores.[1] As early

[1] These auction sales had usually been held at "Nachtmaals," and confined to farmers whose purchases were limited in amount when live-

as March the issue of rations except in sick and necessitous cases had been discontinued in certain of the better districts. In the poorer districts it was not unnatural that the closing down of the department should be contemplated with some concern. The people had grown so accustomed to being helped that they felt more unable than ever to help themselves. Even from the wheat districts there came an appeal for assistance to be continued—not in food, but in seed.

'It must now be decided,' wrote the administrator of relief for the Ladybrand district in his February report, 'whether you will further assist the farmers with seed wheat for the coming sowing season in April. There is really little seed wheat here, and I am sure that it would be the greatest boon to the farmers, rich as well as poor, if they could purchase from the department's stores. Should sufficient seed be held, I am confident that a large quantity would be realized for cash at a small profit, and the handling of a large stock would cost comparatively less in administration than a small one.' From the Ficksburg report for January: 'The season for ploughing for wheat is fast approaching. It will be practically impossible for farmers to procure wheat from any other source than from this department, and if they could do so the samples would be so inferior as not to be worth the sowing. Hence earnest inquiries are being made—if the department has already bought, what sort it intends to buy, and what the probable cost will be. We should recommend Walla-Walla seed for this district, although Red Winter No. 2 would be readily taken.'

The explanation of reports like these, and also the protests received from the poor districts to the south-west of the Boshof-Zastron line, is to be found in the fact that the Orange River Colony possessed at this time no properly organized

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stock was scarce. They were now thrown open to the general public. By Article IX. of Chapter CVII. of the Free State Law-Book, Government property was exempted from payment of auction dues and customs charges. The Secretary of State for the Colonies ruled, however, that auction dues should be paid on sales by the military authorities, and the Repatriation Department was considered to be on similar lines.

Agricultural Department, and that no means had been provided for the maintenance of the sick and destitute.

Relief on the scale hitherto obtaining could not be continued indefinitely. It was decided, therefore, that the department should be closed down on June 30, 1904. In connection with this closing down, it is necessary to describe briefly the measures adopted for the maintenance of the destitute and an industrial scheme, both of which were later found to be impracticable.

By the end of May, 1904, then, exactly two years after the declaration of peace, the Orange River Colony had again become practically self-supporting. But there remained a certain residue of people who were physically unable to work for themselves, together with a few penniless widows and orphans, for whom some provision had to be made. Here the department had to break new ground. The problem of providing for the poor and needy was not the outcome of the war. Like the bijwoner problem, to which it was akin, it was part of the legacy left by the late Free State Government. The question of providing assistance for the aged, crippled, and entirely destitute, who were unable to earn their own living and who had no relatives or friends who could properly be called upon to support them, constantly presented itself to the Government of the late Republic. No serious attempt had, however, been made to deal with this class.[1] Their condition had been rendered more acute by the war, and their future was a continual source of anxiety to the Relief Department. The mere existence of this department and the very general relief it afforded served for a while to shelve the question, but when that relief was about to be withdrawn it again cropped up, and to devise some means for its solution suddenly became a matter of the utmost urgency and importance.

Any satisfactory pension scheme was not easily to be found, and outdoor relief had little to recommend it beyond the abuses to which it lay open. After much consideration

[1] Parliamentary Paper, Cd. 2482, p. 39.

the Government decided to purchase four farms adjoining each other in the Lindley district to form a home for the aged and destitute poor, and others who from bodily ailments or deformity were unable to support themselves. Buildings were erected, and accommodation was provided originally for some 300 inmates. About £29,000 was devoted to this purpose from repatriation funds. The farms, which came to be known as the 'Hope Homes,' were placed under the care and direction of two philanthropists, who were prepared to assume full responsibility for their maintenance, the department furnishing the needful supplies in stock and stores, and paying salaries to their assistants for the first year. The institution of these homes was more or less an experiment, for nothing of the kind had previously been tried in the Orange River Colony, and it was doubtful at first whether the Boers could be induced to accept the kind of assistance which they afforded. At first the scheme met with the approval of the leading Boers throughout the colony, and it was regarded as at least satisfactory by the destitutes themselves; but later it was found to be unworkable, and the institution was closed in September, 1905.

In March, 1904, the Government appointed a Commission to consider and report upon the best methods of promoting the establishment and development of minor industries in the Orange River Colony.[1] From one point of view this was another attempt to deal with the 'poor white' problem. It has been seen that the scheme of relief works did not prove an unqualified success, and the question of the future lying ahead of the inmates of the relief camps was raised on more than one occasion. These camps were not intended originally to be a permanent institution, and it was frequently pointed out that an endeavour should be made to find permanent employment for their inmates when the camps should be closed. It was felt that the establishment of industries, either controlled directly by the Government or subsidized by it,

[1] *Vide* in this connection an article of mine which appeared in the *Globe* for May 20, 1904.

would not only provide a certain means of livelihood to the strong and able-bodied, but that it would also afford employment to those who did not possess the physical robustness requisite for heavy manual labour, and who had for many months been a heavy charge on repatriation funds, with no immediate and little ultimate prospect of improving their position.

From another standpoint the industrial scheme was distinctly a move in the right direction. Against a growing expenditure and increasing liabilities the Orange River Colony had few assets except its farms, denuded to an abnormal extent, not only by the clearance policy of the war, but also by the recent unprecedented drought. The establishment of new and suitable industries would, it was considered, do much to redress eventually the disproportion existing between the exports and imports of the colony.

Hitherto the occupations of the Orange River Colony burghers had remained almost purely pastoral in character; but that both the Boers and their women-folk possessed a certain aptitude for other things was clearly demonstrated by the number of curios manufactured by the prisoners of war in Ceylon, St. Helena, and elsewhere, and by the lacework and carpentry done under instruction in the refugee camps. His mode of life had made the Boer necessarily a 'jack-of-all-trades,' for a man soon learns to turn his hand to most things when he lives a day's journey from any and every source of supply. The Boer farm, like the English farm of the Middle Ages, has to be more or less self-contained. 'The average Boer can build a house or a waggon, make a set of harness or a pair of boots, shoe a horse, weave a basket or a straw hat, construct a comfortable "rustbank" or a chest of drawers, dry a roll of tobacco or twist a cigar.' Industries could be started assured, therefore, of the first factor essential to their success—namely, a technically gifted population. It was not unreasonable to hope that the Boer, who already possessed the necessary rudiments of many useful crafts, might soon, under careful instruction, become proficient.

The Commission sat for several months and took a vast amount of evidence, which was later embodied in a voluminous report. The gist of this report was to the effect that the Orange River Colony was totally lacking in the raw material required for the establishment of industries, and the Commissioners were unable to recommend the adoption of any industrial scheme on an extensive scale. An initial loss was inevitable in an undertaking of this kind, but few people doubted that the promotion of industries, somewhat on the lines of the schemes adopted in Würtemberg and in Ireland, could eventually be made to pay. Instead of the boom anticipated at its close, the war had, however, been succeeded by a period of agricultural depression and industrial stagnation. Consequently, retrenchment in all branches of the service was the order of the day, and so many millions had already been spent on repatriation and relief that a few thousands could not be found for embarking on a scheme which would not only have been of enormous and permanent benefit to the people of the colony, but also bade fair to prove eventually a paying concern.

## CHAPTER VIII

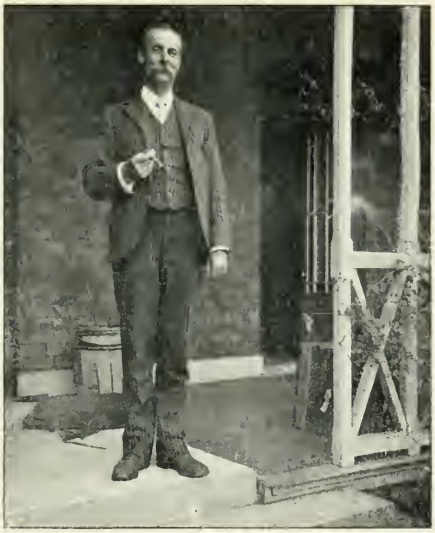
### REPATRIATION FROM WITHIN AND WITHOUT

'Of all the cants which are canted in this canting world—though the cant of hypocrites may be the worst—the cant of criticism is the most tormenting!'—STERNE.

'All we see about us, King, Lords, and Commons, the whole machinery of the State, all the apparatus of the system, and its varied workings, end in simply bringing twelve good men into a box.'—LORD BROUGHAM.

'WHEN the whole story is told,' wrote Lord Milner of repatriation, 'I think it will be regarded as a remarkably creditable one, though I am far from saying that a good deal of money has not been thrown away here and there. But I cannot see how it could have been otherwise, when we had to grapple with a work so vast, so urgent, thrown upon us so suddenly, and under circumstances in which delay might have involved not only untold misery, but actual loss of life. Haste and economy are never compatible, and extreme haste was forced upon us by the conditions of the problem.'[1] Though very inadequately, the story has been told, and attention will now be directed to the cost of repatriation, and more particularly to the losses incurred, which might have been avoided had the whole organization been perfect from the start, had all the officers employed been fully qualified for, and experienced in, the duties they were called upon to carry out, had the material placed at their disposal been complete in every possible way. The wisdom of applying ordinary audit rules to expenditure made on such an undertaking as repatriation may be open to

[1] Parliamentary Paper, Cd. 2102, p. 11. 'Everything had to be done in a rush and desperate hurry, and the surprising part of the business is that most things were done so well' (*African World*, October 31, 1903).



Lieut.-Col. H. J. McClaughlin, D.S.O.,
Secretary to the Central Board.



Three of His Subordinates.

question, and it goes without saying that the department failed fully to stand such a test. It would, indeed, have been marvellous had it been otherwise. It must be remarked, however, that this test was a very severe one, and it is submitted that the department came through the ordeal somewhat better than many of its critics had anticipated.

A Pharaoh is said to have arisen in Egypt who knew not Joseph. The difficult position of an officer in quelling a riot has frequently been pointed out, because the question whether the force he employed for the purpose was necessary or excessive will probably be ultimately determined by a judge and jury, and that 'the estimate of what constitutes necessary force formed by a judge and jury, sitting in quiet and safety after the suppression of a riot, may differ considerably from the judgment formed by a general or magistrate who is surrounded by armed rioters.' When the period of strain and stress had passed, when the extreme pressure of repatriation work was over, when things from an executive point of view were running smoothly, the Colonial Office despatched to the Orange River Colony an auditor to examine repatriation accounts. This officer collected round him a considerable staff, in addition to the inspectors of accounts sent out to the districts, and, snugly installed in a comfortable office, with no knowledge of the country and ignorant of the earlier difficulties, these gentlemen proceeded to wade through every available document, and to call for records which in many cases had not been kept.

An attempt was made gradually to enmesh repatriation in the coils of red-tape which were inseparable from the working of more permanent departments.[1] But it was soon found impossible to apply the Colonial Office financial instructions in their entirety. Instructions were, consequently, issued

[1] This does not mean that red-tape is to be condemned. It is essential in accounting and auditing, and, for that matter, in all government. 'There must be people to keep an office in order, to make a fetish of etiquette, to insist on a stereotyped procedure, and to see the world dimly through a mist of "previous papers."' The point submitted is that red-tape was inapplicable to repatriation.

that the auditors should devote their attention to seeing that all transactions were properly vouched, that no undue waste or extravagance took place, that the charges for administration were according to the authorized establishment, that the stocks and stores purchased were properly disposed of and accounted for, and that the scheme of repatriation, as defined in the Terms of Surrender and any subsequent instructions, was being properly carried out.

Even subject to these limitations the task was most arduous, involving as it did the perusal and careful examination of material which was huge in amount but frequently incomplete in detail, and it occupied three years. The expenses of auditing helped to swell considerably the already heavy expenditure incurred, and it is not quite obvious what practical end was served, beyond fixing the responsibility for mistakes made, and emphasizing what should and what should not be done in a scheme which had never been undertaken before, and which is never likely to be undertaken again.

The repatriation scheme on its financial side lay open to many criticisms, and these must be examined. The shortcomings of the department were numerous, and an attempt will be made rather to explain than to justify their existence. It may be stated at once that the amount involved is over £140,000, which will be found under the head of losses in the final statement of receipts and expenditure,[1] and which was made up as follows:

| | £ | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Deaths, etc. ... ... ... ... | 119,865 | 11 | 0 |
| Stores and trading ... ... ... | 19,111 | 3 | 2 |
| Defalcations ... ... ... ... | 2,002 | 15 | 5 |
| | £140,979 | 9 | 7 |

Before dealing with these losses, however, attention must be directed to criticisms of a more general character. Reference has already been made to some of these, and they may be

[1] *Vide* Appendix G, p. 278.

regrouped under the following headings: (1) Bad book-keeping, including lack of supervision and consequent defalcations. (2) No system of purchasing stores. (3) Assistance afforded to persons other than those contemplated in Section X. of the Articles of Surrender.

With regard to the first of these criticisms, the reader is asked to bear in mind the circumstances under which the restoration of the people to their homes was undertaken. The circular letter of June 21, 1902, describes in detail the form of the accounts which was adopted by the department.[1] The instructions contained in this circular are sufficiently precise, and the proposed form of accounts is clearly stated; but the cessation of hostilities found the Repatriation Department, which had then been in existence as a small central staff for some six weeks, in a state of total unpreparedness to cope with a mass of work such as was bound to accumulate upon the commencement of repatriation. Little provision had been made for the various appointments which were suddenly created throughout the colony, and the difficulty of providing at a moment's notice twenty-two competent accountants, who had to be instructed as to the methods of the accounts which they were expected to keep, was one which was found to be beyond the power of the Central Board. This was due to the fact that the best material in the country was still in the field, and that repatriation had to be undertaken before the irregular corps had been disbanded. The Civil Service had not been organized, and there was an entire lack of trained accountants. The district repatriation officers, especially the secretaries and accountants, had, like the Resident Magistrates, to be taken almost entirely on trust. Forms had to be evolved to suit the exigencies of the department, and these had to be printed and sent out to the districts. Postal communication between the districts and the head office was infrequent and irregular, owing to the great distances which had to be covered, and to the scarcity of transport and inhabitants, and it was sometimes weeks

[1] *Vide* Appendix A, p. 263.

before the local accountant, when appointed, found himself in possession of the requisites necessary to carry out his work.

Meanwhile the Resident Magistrates had got out to their districts, and the local boards had been formed. The position at the time, then, was this: The Central Board was engaged in ascertaining the requirements of each district; in purchasing stock, seed, building material, farm implements, food-stuffs; in confirming loans made by the local commissions; and in deciding the questions of principle which from time to time arose. The local commissioners were employed in returning families to their farms; in transporting supplies, which were being received from the military and from the head office, to the district depots; in issuing rations; in granting advances of stock, stores, and cash to individuals; and in generally supervising the control and management of large mobs of draught animals which had been taken over from the military, and which demanded a considerable amount of attention on account of their wretched and diseased condition. In addition to repatriation work, the chairman of the board, whose duty it was to supervise the accounts, had his own magisterial duties to perform, and could not always be on the spot owing to his absence on other duties, such as inquests, periodical courts, etc. The commissioners had their own private business to attend to. Consequently, to a great extent in many districts the details of the accounts were left in the hands of the secretary, who was also the accountant, assisted in the first instance only by an issuer and head conductor; for it was not until most of the mischief had been done that the Central Board granted the extra clerical assistance which was so essential. The majority of the accountants were untried and unproven men, who in most cases had to pick up the details of the work as best they could. Several of the magistrates and many of the accountants were still further handicapped by ignorance of the locality and the inhabitants.

That the accounts in many of the districts were found at a later date to be in a state of hopeless confusion is not to be wondered at when it is understood that at first the only super-

vision exercised over them was from the head office, upon examination of the monthly returns, which were often received in a most irregular manner. This is the explanation, but not the justification, of bad book-keeping. While every allowance must be made for the difficulty that was experienced at the time in obtaining competent men to take up positions of trust, it is to be regretted that the Central Board did not engage inspectors of accounts at the outset, who, when duly qualified at the head office, might have been employed in travelling in the districts for the purpose of seeing that instructions were being carried out and accounts properly kept. It is also to be regretted that the Resident Magistrates did not at the time emphasize the fact that they were unable properly to supervise the work of their accountants.

It was not possible to lay down any system of purchasing stores, still less to adopt the principle of public tender. At the commencement the department called for tenders, and advertised both in the Orange River Colony press and in that of the adjoining colonies. The call, it has been seen, met with no response. In the first instance, so far from local merchants being able to make quotations, they sought the aid of the department to get their stocks up-country and to replenish their stores. The whole business of the country was disorganized. The railway system was congested. There were so few stores of any kind in the colony that the ordinary methods of purchase could hardly have been applied.

An examination of the list of debtors on the books of the department would reveal the fact that many persons were assisted by the department who were not entitled to such assistance under the terms of Article X. And it would be possible to quote examples of assistance being given to farmers in possession of unmortgaged or slightly mortgaged farms; to land settlers; to storekeepers and other persons for the purpose of obtaining better prices on the realization of the department's stocks and stores. These examples are twelve in number, but the loans are small in amount. From what has already been said as to the general misinterpretation of

Article X., the reader may be somewhat astonished to discover that more loans of this character were not made. It has already been pointed out that the assistance granted by the Repatriation Department to land settlers in the Orange River Colony was insignificant compared with that granted to the same class in the Transvaal. There is no doubt that the Orange River Colony Department erred in adhering too strictly to the wording of Article X. in this connection. It is true that assistance was also given to persons other than ex-burghers in the form of allowing credit for purchases made; but the department, it is submitted, was justified in thus disposing of its surplus stores, on the ground that, if immediate cash had been insisted upon, no sales, or sales at only very inadequate prices, would have taken place.

The sum of £119,865 11s. is arrived at as follows:

| | £ | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Horses, deaths and missing, 2,895 ... ... | 57,734 | 15 | 4 |
| Mules, ,, ,, 2,693 ... ... | 48,555 | 7 | 0 |
| Cattle, ,, ,, 3,623 ... ... | 45,222 | 8 | 10 |
| Sheep, ,, ,, 1,771 ... ... | 3,272 | 19 | 10 |
| | 154,785 | 11 | 0 |
| Less rebate allowed by military authorities in respect of above losses ... ... ... | 34,920 | 0 | 0 |
| Net losses on live-stock ... ... | £119,865 | 11 | 0 |

I do not propose to describe afresh the poverty-stricken and diseased condition of the draught animals transferred by the army, because the subject has been dealt with at some length in previous chapters. It may here be stated that it is not quite obvious how the restoration of the people to their homes could possibly have been undertaken—at least, for some months—unless this transfer had been effected; and it must be admitted that, bad as they were, the animals and stores taken over from the military authorities materially hastened the work of repatriation. In respect of losses, the War Office granted a rebate to the Repatriation Departments of both colonies, and £34,920 represents the Orange River Colony's share. The percentage of deaths to the total number

of animals handled during the whole period of the department's existence was as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Horses ... ... ... ... | 24·4 per cent. |
| Mules ... ... ... ... | 22·8 ,, |
| Oxen and cattle ... ... ... | 9·5 ,, |
| Sheep ... ... ... ... | 0·9 ,, |

The numbers of horses and mules appear large in the aggregate, but the average per depot really only works out at less than three and six respectively, and in view of the number dealt with (11,713 horses and 10,659 mules), and the circumstances which have already been explained, as well as the period covered, this loss may not be considered excessive. With regard to sheep, there appears to have been a want of uniformity in the districts in taking on and issuing young lambs. Frequently lambs were taken on charge, but ewes sold with lambs at feet were issued as one head.

The unsatisfactory condition of the live-stock purchased in the Cape Colony by buyers on commission has been referred to in a previous chapter. It must be pointed out that these buyers were in nowise official or directly connected with the Government. The object was to restock the country as soon as possible without it being generally known that the department was purchasing. The buyers were perfectly competent and of the utmost probity. The explanation of losses must be attributed to the reason previously given. The stock in many cases was bought in distant parts of the Cape Colony, and had to be sent by road for long distances—the railway at the time being monopolized by the exit of the army. In transit by road there is every reason to believe that unscrupulous persons along the line of route used to subvert the drivers in charge of the stock, and carry out an exchange of valuable for practically worthless animals. The frauds thus perpetrated were impossible to discover at the time, especially as only a small proportion of the whole consignment was sometimes affected. Purchases of considerable magnitude were made, and a large extent of territory had consequently to be tapped. There is little doubt, though it was never admitted, that the

buyers nominated by the department frequently employed agents, not so honest as themselves, who, acting under telegraphic instructions, bought and despatched herds of inferior cattle without submitting them for inspection.

There are many items in the loss account which must be placed to the debit of excessive, and what turned out to be mistaken, purchases. This was particularly the case in connection with mules and meat. A larger number of mules was purchased than was asked for by the local boards, and they later became a drug on the market.

It has been seen that Rhodesian red-water broke out in the Transvaal. The Orange River Colony Agricultural Department had not at the time organized a veterinary branch. The Repatriation Department was called upon to perform the veterinary duties of the whole colony. It was more than probable that red-water would spread to the Orange River Colony, even if it did not swamp the whole country. These were the considerations which induced the department to purchase additional mules beyond the immediate requirements of the various districts. It was feared that red-water might envelop the Orange River Colony and sweep away the draught oxen, upon which so much depended to get ground ploughed for the necessary raising of cereals. In contemplation of such a contingency the department could not do otherwise than make some provision against it. Fortunately, owing to the splendid cordon drawn at this time by the South African Constabulary, whose services in this connection won the warm appreciation later of Lord Selborne, our anticipations were not realized, and some hundreds of mules were not actually taken up.

There was an additional expense incurred in connection with the importation of mules, due to the fact that the port of disembarkation had frequently to be changed from East London to Cape Town, and *vice versâ*. This largely depended at the time upon the amount of rolling-stock placed at the disposal of the Cape ports by the Cape railway authorities: sometimes one port was more favoured than another, or home

shippers were using one place more than the other. In the matter of truckage it has been seen that repatriation had to take its chance with the general public. In the absence of any definite and regular allotment at all the ports, it often happened that one week's trucks were obtainable at one port and not at another, so that on the arrival in South Africa of a shipment of mules, arrangements had to be made for the steamer to be sent to a port other than that originally determined upon. The actual distribution of trucks at one particular date was also materially affected by the exigencies of the military demands thereon, and these the military authorities could not forecast with any exactitude for any length of time.

The most disastrous transaction from a financial point of view undertaken by the department was the purchase of some 7,000 Merino rams, and the difficulty of disposing of these rams on account of Boer conservatism has already been mentioned. In this particular instance the Boer was perfectly correct in his judgment. The rams, although sold by a dealer possessing excellent credentials, were not up to the standard expected, and they had lost in condition during a long sea voyage; but the few rams which were taken up by the farming community turned out in many cases exceedingly well, and the distribution of the others improved considerably the standard of wool. The purchase was an experiment, and experimenting is usually a costly business. A direct financial loss to Government was sustained, but it may fairly be said that a portion at least of this loss has been subsequently made up by the improvement in sheep effected throughout the colony.

The remaining trading losses sustained were in the main due to the broad fact that the department had been obliged to buy in a dear market, but that it had to realize in a cheap one. In fact, it may be said all along to have been cutting its own throat, for its whole work tended to spoil the market in which it would eventually have to dispose of its surplus stocks and stores. Under these circumstances, which were obvious from

the beginning, surpluses should not, of course, have been allowed to accumulate. They were not allowed to accumulate to any large extent, with one exception, and that exception was food-stuffs. Meal and flour, however, as well as coffee and sugar, found a ready market. With tinned meat the case was otherwise.

On closing down, the department was found to be in possession of over 600,000 pounds of surplus tinned meat (much of it bad), for which it had paid from 7d. to 8d. per pound, and for which it managed with some difficulty to obtain 2d. per pound (no allowance being made for any that was bad), involving a loss approximately of £15,000. This loss, again, can be explained. The reader is again asked to take into consideration the following circumstances, which have previously been referred to, and which will now be merely restated: So far as anything is known of the certainties, or rather uncertainties, of the South African climate, 1904, instead of being a favourable season, should have been the climax of the drought. The purchaser of supplies was still haunted by the cries for food which had characterized the early days of repatriation, and he determined to err on the safe side. The matter of supplies was admittedly a very difficult one to regulate. Some loss on tinned meats was inevitable, but the loss proved very much heavier than had been anticipated. The meat and vegetable rations had been in the hands of the department for over two, and in the country for probably something like four, years. The recent meat scandals have shown that the contents of so-called tins of meat are not always what their labels indicate. The meat in question had travelled incessantly, and had been exposed to all weathers—to the heat by day and the cold by night; and it was hardly matter for wonder, therefore, that a large percentage of it had become decomposed.

It was the amount of bad meat—known to be considerable—which was the main factor in determining the price. There were other factors, such as the almost entire absence of ready-money, except among Jewish dealers, who did not fail to

combine. On the other hand, the Government lay particularly open to attack on account of the lack of co-operation between civil and military departments. The purchase and sale of meats is a practical illustration of the censure, so justly deserved, which was recently passed by the War Stores Commission on the attitude of the military authorities and the Repatriation Departments to each other. 'It is certainly strange,' the report of the Commissioners stated—and the significance of that report cannot be too strongly emphasized—'that more dealings did not take place between the two departments unless there was a reluctance to deal, such as some of the civilian witnesses believed to exist.'[1] The Orange River Colony Repatriation Department purchased preserved meat to the extent of 791,696 pounds only from the army, while the purchases of this article from other sources amounted to 3,787,566 pounds. The Repatriation Department took over originally all the meat that the military authorities could conveniently spare. Later a quotation received from them was higher than that obtained elsewhere. It is true that a revised quotation was subsequently received from the Army Service Corps, but meanwhile the department had made other arrangements. The issue of bad meat to burghers naturally caused, it has been seen, considerable dissatisfaction: the risk of loss from purchasing from old military stocks was very great. Eventually both military and repatriation were found to be glutting the same market at the same time with surpluses of the same article, and they had pitted against them, as roughly the only possible purchasers, a ring of Jews. The only thing that can be said in favour of the Orange River Colony Repatriation Department is that it succeeded in securing a price for its meat which compared more than favourably with that obtained by other departments in a like predicament.

There were additional minor losses, which were due to deterioration and pilfering on the part of natives and others. A considerable quantity of seed corn, especially

[1] Parliamentary Paper, Cd. 3127.

wheat and mealies, was delayed in issue on account of the drought, and, different kinds of grain being overcrowded in store, weevil frequently spread from one to the other on account of inattention to periodical overhauling. It has been seen that large quantities of forage and supplies had sometimes, as in the cases of Vredefort and Frankfort, already quoted, to be stacked on the open veldt. They were guarded at night by natives. In several cases these natives themselves stole; in many more they slept on sentry-go. Deficiencies in stores were inevitable at the commencement, and it was too much to expect that they should be satisfactorily accounted for months later, when the circumstances had frequently been forgotten. These deficiencies were not on the whole excessive, and a few instances are given.

| Article. | Amount handled. | Deficiency. | Percentage (Approximate). |
|---|---|---|---|
| Meal ... | 9,000,000 pounds | 38,996 pounds | 0·43 |
| Mealies ... | 88,000,000 ,, | 27,586 ,, | 0·03 |
| Oats ... | 98,000,000 ,, | 66,230 ,, | 0·07 |
| Potatoes ... | 2,300,000 ,, | 47,476 ,, | 2·06 |

Such was to some extent the work of repatriation and relief regarded from within. What precisely was the effect of that work on the population dealt with is difficult to trace. Misconception of the terms of Vereeniging has been very general. They have been regarded as a treaty of peace, which they were not.[1] The question of effective occupation is too thorny a subject to be entered upon here; but while there is little doubt that the proclamation of May 24, 1900, annexing the Orange Free State, was most distinctly premature, there is still less doubt that the British occupation had become thoroughly effective at least six months before the cessation of hostilities.[2] The Boer war was terminated, not by a treaty

[1] 'The agreement embodying the Terms of Surrender of the routed remnants of the Boer forces has, therefore, no internationally legal basis. The case would be different if the British Government had really recognised the existence of the Government of the South African Republic down to May 31, 1902' ('International Law,' L. Oppenheim, vol. ii., p. 279).

[2] 'The fact that all the towns and all the lines of communication were in the hands and under the administration of the British army, that the

of peace, but through subjugation.[1] The Boer demands at the time could not be taken seriously, and they were probably not seriously intended. What really happened was that the British dictated their own terms, and those terms were so liberal that the Boers could not do otherwise than accept them. The Boers had no real say in the matter. They could not back up their demands, or, in fairness to them be it said, they would not have left in the lurch those rebels and foreigners who had assisted them, and who were excluded from benefiting by the provisions of Article X.[2] The benefits granted under this article were obviously an act of grace on the part of the victor, and not a matter of right for the conquered. Great Britain felt that she was acting magnanimously, and she expected her magnanimity to be accepted with gratitude.

But the repatriation scheme, like the fatal policy of conciliation which preceded and led up to it, was capable of being misunderstood, and was misunderstood. Magnanimity was interpreted to be a sign of weakness, and repatriation was demanded as a right. It was, therefore, in no friendly spirit that the Boers regarded the scheme, and that scheme was

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inhabitants of small places were taken away into concentration camps, that the enemy forces were either in captivity or routed into comparatively small guerilla bands, and, finally, that wherever such bands tried to make an attack a sufficient British force could within reasonable time make its appearance, was quite sufficient to assert British authority over that vast territory, although it took more than a year before peace was finally established' (*ibid.*).

[1] 'Although nowadays no longer so frequent as in former times, subjugation is not at all of rare occurrence. Thus modern Italy came into existence through the subjugation by Sardinia in 1859 of the Two Sicilies, the Grand Dukedom of Tuscany, the Dukedoms of Parma and Modena, and in 1870 the Papal States. Thus, further, Prussia subjugated in 1866 the Kingdom of Hanover, the Dukedom of Nassau, the Electorate of Hesse-Cassel, and the free town of Frankfort-on-the-Main. And Great Britain annexed in 1900 the Orange Free State and the South African Republic' (*ibid.*).

[2] 'Mais l'Angleterre, ce que l'on ne peut lui reprocher, avait entendu réserver ses droits de souveraineté sur ses sujets et ne pas subordonner à un arrangement avec les Boërs soumis son action pénale à l'égard de ses nationaux coupables de félonie envers elle' ('La Guerre Sud-Africaine au Point de Vue du Droit International,' Despagnet).

rendered more difficult of execution by the mere fact that it was included in the Terms of Surrender. The Boers viewed repatriation 'as a tardy recognition of a wrong done.'[1] It is impossible to think that they were thankful for our generosity, or that the restoration to their homes won their gratitude. There were, of course, exceptions. When on tour, it was no uncommon thing to meet in the district towns many of the better-to-do Boers who had come in, frequently from long distances, to meet one in order to express their appreciation of all that the Government was doing for them. The attitude of the population generally, however, was sullen and critical. Article X. would, undoubtedly, have been more beneficial in its effect if, instead of forming part of the terms of Vereeniging, it had been published immediately after the surrender had been completed. There could then have been no doubt of Great Britain's intention to deal with her new subjects on terms of unprecedented liberality. But all might still have gone well if repatriation had been favoured with good seasons. The drought, however, which followed not only hampered considerably the efforts of the department for the material well-being of the farming population, but also tended somewhat to discount the wholesome political effect which the work of repatriation would undoubtedly have had.

The contrast between the view taken by Mr. Bryce in his 'Impressions of South Africa' and that formed by Mr. Chamberlain some years later on his visit to Bloemfontein in January, 1903, has been noted in a previous chapter. Two equally divergent views may be found in recent Parliamentary debates. In dealing with the subject of the Transvaal Constitution, Mr. Churchill drew an idyllic picture of the Orange River Colony as 'a tranquil agricultural State, pursuing under a wise and tolerant Government a happy destiny of its own.'[2] 'Good feeling between individuals,' said Lord Milner in the Upper House, 'on which we are justified in resting so much hope, is not going to save the British settlers from hostile

[1] *Contemporary Review*,' July, 1903.
[2] *The Times*, August 25, 1906.

executive action in a country in which they have few representatives or no representatives in the Legislature.'[1] There can be little doubt to anyone acquainted with actual conditions as to which of these views is the more correct. The former is imaginary; the latter is only too real.

The political problem in the Orange River Colony is probably more complex than is generally supposed, and the subject of granting responsible government is too large a one to be dealt with here. The home reader may be reminded, however, that there are at least four communities to be considered in the Orange River Colony. In addition to the old British residents—whose last state will be worse than the first if handed over to the Boers—'there are, first of all, the British settlers whom we have placed on the land or introduced into the Civil Service since the conclusion of the war, and whose fortunes are entirely dependent on the effective maintenance of our supremacy. There are the so-called "Khaki Boers"—those who surrendered before the end of the war, took service as National Scouts, or otherwise assisted the British Government. Finally, there are the "echte vaderlanders," the Boers who fought to the bitter end, and who form a vast majority, which can count on swamping the other two classes combined.'[2] And politically least, but numerically greatest, there is the native population.

The attitude of these various classes to each other, which necessitated special treatment in the case of repatriation, has been described. The repatriation scheme was not responsible for the wounds made by the war, but, on the other hand, it did not succeed in healing them. The extremely moderate and reasonable views of the land settlers have been quoted. Their protest against the grant of self-government to the inevitably irreconcilable Boer majority, like all the other protests which have been made, is peculiarly void of any personal ill-feeling or individual ill-will. But they have pointed out that the Boer as a unit in a political organization

[1] *The Times*, August 25, 1906. [2] *Ibid.*

must be regarded on a different footing from the Boer as a hospitable neighbour.

The following views of a British farmer of twenty-four years' standing in the Orange River Colony, contained in a letter to *The Times*, go far to show how extremely moderate the land settlers are in their plea for protection:[1] 'I even go,' says this writer, and his view is not extreme, 'so far as to question whether a single member of the present Government's supporters would vote for responsible government could he be induced to spend six months in the fastnesses of Boerdom, and learn the hard facts of our everyday relationship with these our erstwhile enemies, now our intolerant fellow-citizens.

'He would see the young English settler struggling to make ends meet on his isolated farm, enduring the boycott of a cordon of Dutch neighbours. He would find the door shut in his face by the "vrouw" of whom he asked a drink of water, if he spoke not the "taal." . . . At the Orange Unie meetings he would hear his mother-tongue referred to as a foreign language in this British colony, and learn something of the deep-rooted sedition throughout the land. At the average farmers' association meeting he would realize the futility of interposing a remark in his own vernacular, for he would get neither a hearing nor an answer. . . . But by far the most serious of the disadvantages of the loyalists is trial by jury. Our juries of nine usually consist of six Dutchmen and three Englishmen, with the regrettable, but not altogether unnatural, consequences that we, guided by long experience, realize that in criminal cases which are beyond a magistrate's jurisdiction the court of justice is closed to us; that we have, in fact, no remedy when the Boer is the transgressor. . . .[2]

[1] *The Times*, August 25, 1906.

[2] This statement has been severely challenged by the Chief Justice of the Orange River Colony, and it may possibly be somewhat exaggerated. Litigation is, however, usually expensive and proverbially tedious, and it is to be feared that the mere suspicion of unfair treatment, even if not in every case well founded, may serve to impair that confidence in the absolutely impartial administration of justice which has always been the

Already the jubilant majority of defeated, repatriated, and compensated enemies of everything British are taunting us with the well-founded threat that we shall very soon be under their thumb once more and compelled to speak their "taal." . . .

'Among the first consequences of the Boer rule will be: The disbanding of the South African Constabulary and the substitution of a small force consisting chiefly of young Boers; a gradual but general dismissal of British-born officials from Government offices and railways; the serving out of rifles to ex-burghers at the expense of the State; a wholesale appointment of Boer Justices of the Peace; the establishment of a colony for "poor whites"; a scheme of taxation which will be unduly burdensome to the commercial community; educational reform to favour the Dutch and country districts at the expense of the British urban communities. Most of these objects are declared in public meetings fearlessly, as by masters of the situation. . . .

'Already the Boers are enjoying at our hands not only equal civic rights with ourselves, but a pure and impartial administration of their own laws. What they went to war about rather than give us we have already given them, and more; but, true to their old proclivity, the power graciously accorded them is to be used as a stepping-stone for more, for they are already discussing at their political meetings whether they will make it a five years' or seven years' residential qualification for full civic rights—precisely the figures which produced the war. Truly the situation is Gilbertian. . . .

'Are we never to profit by past experience in this land? A just and firm rule would insure us peace with honour, whereas this constant evidence of weakness goes far to unsettle the Boers and to feed their most sanguine hopes. I repeat that every concession of power to them is not only an injustice to those of us who stood by the Empire in the dark days of 1900-1902,

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distinguishing feature of British rule. In other particulars the contents of this letter are hardly open to dispute by anyone who knows the facts, irrespective of his political opinions.

but it is an imperial danger. We have only to be generous enough (should I not say "prodigal enough"?) to be sure of having our work to do over again. Every grant of power will be turned against us in the future, and every effort, secret at first, will be made to undo Great Britain's constructive work in this much-troubled land. . . .

'I bear no ill-will towards my Dutch neighbours. . . . I am Afrikander enough to feel that they are part and parcel of the life here, and I would not be without them. Nor would I voice a word of blame for their political aspirations were they conceived in a more friendly spirit towards us. But at the bottom of all the trouble is an unreasoning and fostered hatred for us, a bitterness which, in the absence of literature or their ability to read, is their daily pabulum, recommended, if not insisted upon, by their predicants from the pulpit and traded upon by their wire-pullers throughout the land. Nor do I overstate a fact when I affirm that, in my experience of the relationship between the two peoples, the Briton has always tried to meet the Boer in friendship more than half-way.'[1]

I have quoted at considerable length from this letter, because, to my mind, it only too truly represents the actual situation. For this situation British policy is in the main responsible. If that policy was generally misconstrued, it must be admitted that the construction put upon it by the Boer was not wholly wrong. Our so-called magnanimity and much-trumpeted generosity were in their execution signs of weakness, though in a sense somewhat different from that alleged by the Boer. The war itself and the work of immediate reconstruction have been characterized by a faltering and inconsistency which would seem to indicate that the Briton has lost faith in himself, that the fortitude and

[1] *The Times*, August 25, 1906. 'The Afrikander character, the nature of the country, the conditions of society, the attitude of the Boers, and the position of the Dutch, receive no consideration at all. The policy of England is founded on the erroneous assumption that our late enemies in the field are prepared to meet us half-way, whereas everything they have done and said since the conclusion of peace should lead us to the very opposite conclusion' (*Empire Review*).

perseverance which distinguished his forefathers in building up an empire are no longer his. He has, apparently, become oversensitive himself and fearful of hurting the feelings of others. This oversensitiveness has been particularly noticeable in dealing with the Dutch, who were not slow to take advantage of it. Lord Milner referred to this weakness in the British attitude in a speech delivered at Johannesburg on the eve of his departure from South Africa, and suggested a remedy to his successors.

'We British,' he said, 'are apt to be rather too fussy about the attitude of the Dutch. It may be disappointing that, whatever we do, the other party, or at least a large number of them, still maintain an attitude of aloofness, if not of sullenness. But it is, after all, no more than might have been expected. How little are three years in the life of a people! It is a mistake to keep girding at them for not showing more friendliness than they are as yet able to feel; but it is no less a mistake to try to coax them by offering something more than they are entitled to, and something which in our hearts we know we ought not to give up. Courtesy and consideration for their feelings, always; compromise on questions of principle, the suppression of our natural and legitimate sentiments, never. There is a want of good sense, and, worse still, of self-respect, about that sort of kowtowing which makes it the worst way in the world to impress or to win over a strong, a shrewd, and an eminently self-respecting people. . . . The policy which I would venture to commend to those who may be responsible for the government not of this colony only, but of any South African colony, is a somewhat different one. By all means continue to treat Dutch and British with absolute equality.[1]

[1] It may be remarked, however, that the British have not hitherto been fairly treated by their own Government. The Boer has been pampered and the Briton has been hampered. The contemplated distribution of the converted Chamberlain loan would seem to indicate the continuance of a policy of favouritism to the Boers which has already served to drive from the country thousands of Britons who stood by the Empire in the hour of need, and who had a preferential claim to the Government's consideration. The distribution of this loan, as *The Times* has pointed out, means a dole

We have done for good and all with the system of having two classes of white men in this country, a privileged and an unprivileged class. I say, treat all equally; indeed, try to forget as far as possible the differences of origin. Show the same solicitude, the same zeal, for the interests of every class, of every neighbourhood, regardless whether this or that section predominates in it; but having done that, await with patience the gradual approximation which equality of treatment and community of interests will slowly but surely produce. You can do nothing more to hurry it.'[1]

British policy in the new colonies has in the main been based upon a radical misconception of the Boer character on the part of the British public. This misconception has not hitherto been confined to either of the great political parties; it has been common to both. Both Unionists and Liberals, again, have made South African policy a party question. If Chinese slavery placards served to win one election, it is equally certain that misrepresentation with regard to the progress of the Boer war helped to win another. But the responsibility for the adoption of this policy must be borne eventually, not by the Government of the day, but by the British electorate. On the South African question that electorate has repeatedly allowed itself to be cajoled by party catchwords and to be led astray on side-issues. By their ignorance of, and their lack of interest in, South African affairs, the constituencies of Great Britain are rapidly losing the confidence of their fellow-citizens in the sub-continent. This lack of confidence is gradually becoming evident in a growing determination on the part of both Briton and Boer, who differ on every other question and whose ideals are absolutely incompatible with each other, to eliminate the Imperial factor from South African politics, and to regard

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of two and a half millions to the Boers, as against one and a half millions to the British settlers (see *The Times* for September 4, 1906). An Administration which fails to stand by its own people can hardly expect to win the confidence or the esteem of its opponents.

[1] Speech delivered at Johannesburg, March 31, 1905, Cd. 2842, p. 192.

any alternative as preferable to being made the plaything of English political parties.

'Since the peace the Afrikanders have evinced a stubborn tenacity of their own ideal, altogether admirable when contrasted with the feeble desertion of the other side by its Imperial allies, who, as usual, have gone off upon a side-issue.'[1] In the Orange River Colony the political situation has gone from bad to worse. The relations between the two races, and between different sections of the same race, have become more strained than ever; and, in proportion as the weakness of the Administration has become more apparent, the irreconcilables have grown louder in their demands. 'British South Africans know that for the second time they have been thrown over, and that their sacrifices on behalf of Imperial unity have been ignored. It seems to them that the people at home after eight years of constant effort to retain South Africa under the Union Jack are now seemingly indifferent to the loss of the sub-continent which England has paid for so often both in blood and in money. That is how the Government and electorate of Great Britain are judged by loyal South Africans with regard to the loftiest obligations of statesmanship.'[2]

Although it plays a most important part, racialism is not, however, the dominant factor in South African politics. The struggle is really one between progress on the one hand and retrogression on the other. This is the main issue at stake, but it has frequently been confused owing to the fact that, as a natural outcome of their past history, the British, generally speaking, belong to the progressive party, and the Dutch to the party of retrogression. The difference between the two parties is in its essence rather moral than racial, and there exists a corresponding difference of ideals. 'The one postulates pure government, progressive government, and the attainment of national unity by a general process of assimilation to the British type of character, which implies

[1] *Morning Post*, October 16, 1906.
[2] *National Review*, September, 1906.

an active support of the Imperial connection as an important factor in national evolution. The other ideal, which so far has not generally been associated with honest and progressive government, postulates the attainment of national unity by assimilation to the Dutch type, in relation to which process the Imperial connection is regarded as a necessary evil for the time being, or at least only useful for holding the ring against the intrusion of other foreign influences.'[1] Nowhere in South Africa is the Dutch ideal so predominant or so confidently avowed as in the Orange River Colony, and nowhere are the adherents of Imperial unity in such a small minority. The question whether or not this plucky minority will make any headway must, unfortunately, depend for some time to come upon the amount of support accorded to it by the Imperial Government.

It is commonly held that the ultimate solution of the South African problem will be found in federation, and to such federation the grant of responsible government all round has usually been regarded as an essential preliminary. But the grant of responsible government immediately to the new colonies may tend to retard federation, because, as a recent writer has pointed out, it may increase and strengthen 'those vested interests of provincial Governments which in Australia proved a serious obstacle to the federal movement.' It is difficult to imagine a permanent Dutch majority in the Orange River Colony prepared to forego any portion of its monopoly of government in the interests of South African federation.

On the present political horizon it is possible to discern two forces, both of which are really centrifugal. On the one hand, Natal and the Transvaal are obviously drawing together, and, in the event of a British majority in the latter colony, their projected amalgamation may shortly become an accomplished fact. But, on the other hand, 'what would be the effect of amalgamation on the Cape and the Orange River Colony, to say nothing of Rhodesia? In the Orange River

[1] *Morning Post*, October 23, 1906.

Colony the Boers are in a permanent and overwhelming majority. In the Cape the enfranchisement of the rebels will not improbably result in a Bond victory when the next General Election takes place. Is it, therefore, unlikely, or indeed unreasonable, to suppose that, given an absolute British majority in the Transvaal-Natal Colony, the Cape and Orange River Colony would be drawn together, in the hope of establishing an equally solid and permanent Dutch supremacy south of the Vaal? In this event racial distinctions would be rendered identical with political boundaries, and would become an insurmountable obstacle to federation.'[1] The Natal loyalists are alive to this danger, and they are, consequently, averse to immediate amalgamation. 'The reasons why,' wrote a Natal colonist recently, 'we doubt the wisdom of amalgamation are not entirely local. The change might not be a benefit Imperially; no doubt it would secure a British majority in the united colony, but it might be answered by the amalgamation of the Orange and Cape Colonies, which would then have a certain Dutch majority. South Africa would then be split up into two very antagonistic bodies, and federation, our real goal, deferred to a very distant future.'[2]

I have digressed thus far in order to remind the reader that, although the ebullient Imperialism of warfare may be succeeded on the part of the British public by the inevitable apathy of peace, yet the situation in the Orange River Colony to-day is possibly more critical than it was at the conclusion of the war. The great explorer Barth once remarked: 'It seems that the English are more apt to perform a great deed than to follow up its consequences.' In South Africa we have come dangerously near to verifying his censure.

When all is said and done it must be remembered that even in the Orange River Colony, Dutch to the backbone as it is, the main factor of progress is the Briton, and the question whether that colony will ever be able to compete in the

[1] *Morning Post*, September 1, 1906.
[2] *Spectator*, October 13, 1906.

agricultural market of the world will be decided chiefly by the progressive farmer and the land-settler. The pity of the whole business is that the land-settler should have to suffer for the sins of officialdom, and that the development of land-settlement should have been hampered indirectly by the work of repatriation. The first essential for the promotion of British land-settlement was land, and land could not to any large extent be bought. The scarcity of land on the market was largely due to the fact that by its system of loans the Repatriation Department enabled landowners of mortgaged farms to retain their land instead of selling. Mr. Buchan has pointed out this flaw in the repatriation scheme, and there are probably few who will not endorse his criticism. 'There is no doubt in my mind,' he wrote, 'as to what would have been the wisest and kindest form of repatriation for landowners, had we had the courage to adopt it—compulsory sale of a portion of the farm, and out of the capital thus supplied the farmer could have bought what he wanted at reasonable prices from Government depots. Such a method would have given the Government more good land, which it urgently wants; it would have saved the endless credit accounts, which in the long run will give trouble both to Boer and Government; and it would have saved the pauperization into which the Boer is only too ready to sink. There would, of course, have been many exceptions in the case of the very poor and landless classes, but for the landholder it would have been not only the most politic, but in his eyes the most intelligible plan.'[1]

While practically ousting the would-be land-settler, the repatriation scheme tended to strengthen the hold upon the land of the more backward of the indigenous population, and in so doing to retard agricultural progress and to postpone the future prosperity of the colony. It tended to bolster up the indolent and lazy bijwoner class, and to fortify the excessively Dutch for the fight which is now possibly to be transferred from the veldt to the council-chamber. These are some—and there are others—of the bad points of repatriation.

[1] 'The African Colony,' p. 138.

Regarded simply as the fulfilment of a pledge, an act of grace to a fallen foe, the scheme will probably rank as one hitherto unparalleled in history. In any case, Great Britain can rest assured that so far as repatriation was concerned, she has more than carried out the promises made to her new subjects at Vereeniging. This is, after all, the main point. Although the full-grown men of to-day have failed to recognise and to acknowledge benefits received, it is not unreasonable to hope that, in spite of the deadly influence of priests and women, the work of the concentration camps and repatriation will not be wholly lost on the children of to-morrow and on generations yet unborn.

## CHAPTER IX

### COMPENSATION

'No man ought to looke a given horse in the mouth.'—Heywood.

'Solomon himself, even if backed up by the purse of Fortunatus, would probably make more enemies than friends if he had to give compensation for war losses.'—*Contemporary Review.*

Of the two tasks contemplated in Article X. of the Terms of Surrender only one has hitherto been described; the other—less attractive perhaps, but more important—still remains to be dealt with. The subject of so-called compensation—for I shall continue to employ the misnomer generally in vogue in South Africa at the time—is somewhat intricate, and it is impossible to give any adequate idea within the limits of a single chapter of the magnitude and difficulties of the task imposed upon the Claims Commissioners. A full account of their labours will be found in a voluminous report published in August, 1906. On that report I have drawn very freely, and I have followed more or less the divisions into which it is split up. I cannot, however, enter into the mass of facts, both vast and varied, which the report in question will be found to contain.[1]

Originally, in accordance with the Terms of Surrender, the work of both repatriation and compensation was intended to be carried out by the same district commissions. But while decentralization and difference of treatment were found to be imperative in the case of repatriation, the work of compensation demanded a uniformity of treatment throughout. The

[1] Cd. 3028.



Major T. Marcus McInerney,
Vice-President of the Central Judicial Commission.



Claims Officers starting on Trek.

local commissions were differently constituted in different localities, as their task of assisting in the restoration of the people to their homes, and the necessitous through war losses required to be treated according to the conditions and circumstances of each locality. The reports of the local commissions in connection with claims work widely differed, and the need of some central control, therefore, so as to co-ordinate and render their labours consistent, was soon found to be essential.[1]

Accordingly, the constitution of the Central Judicial Commission, appointed in October, 1902, underwent several modifications, and did not receive its final form until January, 1904. These modifications it is unnecessary to trace in detail. They all tended to increase from time to time the powers of the Commission, which gradually gained full and complete control of all claims work. The local commissions continued to examine and adjudicate all claims, but they acted under the instructions of the Central Commission, which revised all assessments made, and decided what amounts should be disbursed in settlement. Its field of operations was further extended to the payment of military receipts and the distribution of the gratuity granted to 'protected burghers.' The funds placed at the disposal of the Central Judicial Commission and the mode of their disbursement will be dealt with briefly in the following order: Ex-Burgher Fund; the British Subject Fund, including foreign subjects and natives; the Protected Ex-Burgher Fund, together with military receipts.

Strictly speaking, subjugation does not itself touch or affect private property. In the absence of any agreement to the contrary, the declaration of peace signifies a return to the *status quo ante bellum*, while the rights of the parties to the compact are determined by the broad principle of *Uti Possidetis*. On the other hand, there is no claim against the victor on the part of individuals of the newly-conquered

[1] Copies of the instructions issued to the local (repatriation) commissions, military officers, and Resident Magistrates are given in Appendices H i. and H ii., p. 280.

territory in respect of property necessarily damaged or destroyed by the operations of war. In fact, in case of war citizens who have suffered losses owing to the destruction of property inseparable from hostilities have no claim for indemnification against their own Government. 'A native Government may, on the return of peace, see fit for special reason to grant compensation to subjects who have suffered loss in the course of the struggle; but such conduct is founded in charity, not in strict right. The Government of the United States, after the great American civil struggle, refused indemnity for the destruction of property by General Sherman in Alabama. The Germans in 1872, while reimbursing in the parts of Alsace and Lorraine acquired by them the losses sustained by individuals by bombardments, declined to compensate Swiss subjects who suffered by the shelling of Strasburg. The more generous French indemnified, without distinction of nationality, the necessitous victims of the war, but carefully guarded against the recognition in the assisted of any absolute right.'[1]

There was no moral or legal obligation on Great Britain to grant compensation in respect of war losses in South Africa; such grant was purely a matter of policy and an act of grace. The ex-burgher fund of £3,000,000 owed, indeed, its origin to the Terms of Surrender; but Article X. made no provision for compensation. The word 'compensation' does not even appear in Article X. Article X. stated that notes issued under Law No. 1 of 1900 of the Government of the South African Republic, and receipts given by Boer officers in the field, if found to have been duly issued in return for valuable consideration, would be received by the local commissions as evidence of war losses suffered by the persons to whom these notes and receipts had been originally given. But there was no undertaking to pay these notes and receipts; they merely ranked as evidence that war losses had been suffered. When the local commissions had this evidence before them, if the

[1] Walker, 'The Science of International Law'; Bluntschli, 'Le Droit International Codifié,' § 662.

sufferers were unable to provide for themselves, they were entitled to be supplied on what may be called repatriation terms out of the free grant of £3,000,000 so long as the latter remained unspent. Article X. clearly did not even contemplate compensation.[1]

The money already spent by the local commissions on repatriation was regarded as expenditure on account of the £3,000,000. The following scheme of distribution was adopted:

1. Every person who had proved war losses, and in whose favour an award had been made, was paid the amount of the award in full up to £25.

2. Those who had received relief from the local Repatriation Commissions (and which relief they were liable to repay) were paid the amount of such relief up to £25, to be applied towards the repayment of such relief.[2]

3. The balance of the £3,000,000 remaining, after deducting the moneys payable under 1 and 2, was distributed *pro rata* amongst those ex-burghers who had suffered war losses assessed at a greater sum than £25.

It was found by calculations that, if the assessments which exceeded £25 were reduced by 5 per cent., and the fund was supplemented by the sum of £4,050 1s. 3d., the balance for *pro rata* distribution would be sufficient to pay a dividend of 2s. in the £ on the amount of the assessed claims in excess of £25. The fund was therefore supplemented by this amount.

[1] Compensation was a misnomer when applied to the £3,000,000 granted by Article X. The use of the term 'compensation' arose from the fact that relief was based on statements of war losses, and more or less distributed in proportion to them. But the claims for war losses were merely called for, and used, to guide the Government in the distribution of relief. On the other hand, the sums paid to British subjects, foreigners and natives, and the gratuity granted to 'Protected Burghers,' were genuine compensation.

[2] The payment of ex-burgher compensation commenced on October 23, 1905. In September, 1906, the value of loans standing to the debit of individual debtors on the books of the Orange River Colony Repatriation Department had been reduced by almost 50 per cent. through the settlement of ex-burgher compensation. The final distribution of the free grant has been based practically on the assessed claims of all ex-burghers, whether rich or poor.

The following is an illustration of the working of the fund distributed in this way. A, B, C, and D are four claimants, whose claims are respectively £25, £50, £100, £200.

Claimant A would receive payment in full.

Claimant B would receive payment of £27 10s.—viz., the minimum dividend on £25, plus the *pro rata* distribution of 2s. in the £ on the balance of his allowed claim, which is equal to 55 per cent. of his allowed claim.

C would receive payment of £25 and 2s. in the £ on £75—viz., £32 10s., which equals 32½ per cent.

D would receive payment of £25 and 2s. in the £ on £175—viz., £42 10s., which equals 21¼ per cent.; and so on.[1]

The disposal of the £3,000,000, supplemented as previously stated, was as follows:

| | £ | s. | d. | £ | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Amount of ex-burgher fund ... ... ... | | | | 3,000,000 | 0 | 0 |
| Supplement ... ... ... ... ... | | | | 4,050 | 1 | 3 |
| Total fund for distribution ... ... | | | | 3,004,050 | 1 | 3 |
| Amount paid to the Government of Natal for ex-burghers of the ceded portion of the Transvaal ... ... | 100,000 | 0 | 0 | | | |
| Amount awarded to the ex-burghers of the Transvaal ... ... | 1,521,316 | 8 | 8 | | | |
| Amount awarded to the ex-burghers of the Orange River Colony ... | 1,382,733 | 12 | 7 | | | |
| | | | | £3,004,050 | 1 | 3 |

The whole of the cost of the administration of the fund was borne by the Government. In the Orange River Colony 17,747 claims were investigated; 615 of these, amounting to £335,903 18s. 4d., were rejected, and 17,132 were allowed in whole or in part. The sum claimed by these latter was £17,872,932 5s. 10d. The sum at which they were assessed was £8,432,533 13s.

[1] The Government rightly held that the poorer burghers should be more liberally dealt with than the richer. All needed help, but the poorest needed it most. Hence the decision to give at least £25 all round. It is evident that the relief was much greater, in proportion to the loss sustained, in the case of the small man than in that of his richer neighbours.

In November, 1902, it has been pointed out in another chapter, the Imperial authorities made a voluntary gift of £2,000,000, to be applied in paying compensation to British subjects, neutral foreign subjects, and natives. This gift had no connection with the Terms of Surrender; it was purely voluntary. It expressed, not the obligations, but the bounty of the Imperial Government to resident foreigners and to natives as well as to its own subjects. It was made subject to the reservation that 'limited liability companies' and 'large firms' should not share in it; but no definition of 'large firms' had been supplied. It was not unreasonably assumed, however, that the Imperial Government desired its bounty to be distributed amongst the suffering many, and not to be absorbed by the wealthy few, and that the term 'large firms' was generic, and to be construed according to the circumstances of each case. No universal definition could be laid down. In many instances an examination of the facts disclosed that what had been generally regarded as 'large firms' before the outbreak of war were now crippled. During the continuance of the war their trade, if it had not wholly ceased, had been greatly curtailed. Their property had been looted or commandeered. After the restoration of peace some of these once 'large firms' resumed business with diminished capital and under increased expense; it was therefore determined to treat each case on its own merits.

Of the £2,000,000, the sum of £300,000 was apportioned to the compensation of natives. This £300,000 was subdivided among the different colonies as follows: £15,000 for compensation to the natives within the portion of the Transvaal ceded on the declaration of peace to Natal; £114,000 to the natives of the Transvaal; £171,000 to the natives of the Orange River Colony.

The native's attitude towards compensation resembled that which he had previously shown towards concentration camps and repatriation. He did not complain. He expected nothing; he got something; he was grateful.

All claims made by British subjects in the Orange River

Colony were in the first instance investigated by the Resident Magistrates in each district. British subjects as claimants were required to prove their nationality and their loss. The Resident Magistrates provisionally assessed the claims. The claims, with all the evidence taken thereon and the provisional assessments or reports of the Resident Magistrates, were then forwarded to the Central Judicial Commission, who re-examined each claim, and allowed, disallowed, or varied each provisional assessment. Many of the claimants resided since the war in Cape Colony and in Natal. To have insisted on these claimants coming either to the Transvaal or the Orange River Colony to give evidence in support of their claims would have been to them a hardship as well as an expense. These claimants were therefore allowed to prove their claims before Claims Commissions established in the coast colonies, and the assessments arrived at were allowed by the Central Judicial Commission.

Altogether 9,534 persons submitted claims as British subjects. The amount claimed was £4,944,344 13s. 1d.

In the Orange River Colony 1,799 claims were sent in. The amount claimed was £1,368,693 6s. 1d. The amount paid was £512,495 10s.

The number of persons who claimed as foreign subjects was 2,015. Of these no less than 595 were Germans. And in this connection it is not out of place to contrast the liberality of the Imperial Government with the principle laid down by a German Chancellor under somewhat similar circumstances. After the war of 1870-1871 the French Government excluded from compensation German property-holders in France who had suffered loss during the struggle. These property-owners petitioned the German Government, and on July 2, 1871, Prince Bismarck in the Reichstag said: 'The citizen of a country who exercises his industry or profession abroad and suffers in consequence of a war cannot expect compensation. He ought always to remember that the greatest risks attach to the fact that he is working in a foreign country. This is a principle which particularly applies to distant countries

where the law has not the power it has in the States of the Continent of Europe. Business carried on abroad is often more lucrative. It is more profitable, but it is more dangerous. In my view, there is no obligation on the part of the Empire to assist a class of German citizens because war waged by the Empire has caused them loss, to which I will not say we are accessories, although they were caused because we waged war, for the losses are part of the calamity of war.'

In 1871, while excluding Germans, France, for the purposes of compensation, admitted all neutral foreign subjects who were property-holders to equal rights with French citizens. The German Government, dealing with the question of compensation in Alsace and Lorraine, provided that compensation for damage to movable and immovable property caused by the war should be paid out of the war indemnity exacted from France, subject to certain conditions. Amongst these conditions were the following: 'Compensation will be paid only to such claimants who at the time of the promulgation of the law (June 14, 1871) were domiciled in Germany. If the claimants were not German citizens, then compensation would be paid to those only the Government of whose country promised reciprocity in similar cases.' The British Government felt itself unable to, and did not, guarantee the reciprocity required by this condition, and no British subjects received any compensation from the German Government for the losses inflicted by the war of 1870-1871.

With regard to compensation in South Africa, the Imperial Government treated all neutral foreign subjects in precisely the same manner as British subjects, save that foreign subjects had to prove their neutrality. With this exception the claims of foreign subjects were received, investigated and assessed in exactly the same way as claims by British subjects. The appraisement differed in no respect. No distinction was drawn between the causes of war losses, except that the *bons de réquisition* given by military officers in the field were paid the assessed value in full.

The number of persons who claimed as foreign subjects was

2,015; the total amount claimed was £1,494,931 3s. 4d. The number of persons who established their nationality, neutrality, and loss was 695, and the amount claimed by them was £472,682 6s. 6d. The amount allowed was £135,615 8s.

It has been stated in a previous chapter that British subjects were allowed to obtain in advance a portion of the value at which their claims had been assessed. Owing to the destruction wrought by the war, the country was claimant for capital. Yet, until all claims by British and foreign subjects in the two new colonies had been assessed, it was impossible to tell what dividend would be payable on the claims. But at an early stage it was realized that some portion of the assessment could be paid immediately. The £2,000,000 granted in November, 1902, became available in January, 1903, and the first dividend of 6s. 8d. in the £ was paid in the following April. A second dividend of 6s. 8d. in the £ was paid in July, 1903. Later a further dividend of 4s. in the £ was paid, so that every British and foreign claimant received 17s. 4d. in the £ on the amount of his assessment, being at the rate of about 87 per cent. of the assessment.

In order to facilitate distribution, the £2,000,000 was supplemented by the sum of £149 13s. 5d. from colonial funds. The Colonial Government defrayed the whole of the cost of collecting, investigating, assessing, and paying claims under the British Subject Fund. The following is a tabulated statement of its disbursement:

| | £ | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Amount of fund ... ... ... ... ... | 2,000,000 | 0 | 0 |
| Amount of supplement ... ... ... ... | 149 | 13 | 5 |
| Total fund for distribution ... ... | 2,000,149 | 13 | 5 |

| | £ | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Native compensation ... | 300,000 | 0 | 0 |
| Amount payable to British subjects in the Witwatersrand, being 17s. 4d. in the £ on their assessments ... | 584,400 | 1 | 2 |
| Amount payable to British subjects in the remainder of the Transvaal ... | 501,291 | 7 | 10 |

| | £ | s. | d. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Amount payable to British subjects in the Orange River Colony ... ... | 423,887 | 14 | 8 | |
| Amount payable to claimants whose claims were investigated in Cape Colony and Natal ... | 20,357 | 11 | 4 | |
| Amount payable to foreign subjects in the Transvaal, including the territory ceded to Natal, and to foreign subjects in the Orange River Colony .. | 117,533 | 6 | 11 | |
| Amount paid to the Treasury in repayment of advances made to British refugees ... ... ... | 52,679 | 11 | 6 | |
| | | | | £2,000,149 13 5 |

'Requisitions and contributions in war are the outcome of the eternal principle that war must support war. This principle means that every belligerent can make his enemy pay as far as possible for the continuation of the war.'[1] In ancient wars belligerents used to appropriate indiscriminately all public and private property they could lay hands on. This practice, however, grew milder about the seventeenth century, under the influence of the experience that wholesale appropriation tended to demoralize an army, and to render its sustenance in enemy territory extremely difficult. Accordingly, although the right still remained, it was not so generally enforced. Instead of wholesale appropriation, it became customary to levy contributions and to exact requisitions in a more or less methodical manner; but with the development of this custom no belligerent ever dreamt of paying cash for requisitions or of giving receipts in lieu thereof.

[1] Oppenheim, whom I have closely followed, and also Lawrence, Walker, and Risley.

I have used the two terms 'requisition' and 'contribution' indiscriminately, and they may be so used, although they may be very clearly distinguished.

'Strictly speaking, *requisitions* are articles of daily consumption and use taken by an invading army from the people of the occupied territory; *contributions* are sums of money exacted over and above the taxes; and *fines* are payments levied upon a district as a punishment for some offence against the invaders committed within it' (Lawrence, § 204). So far as I am aware, no contributions were exacted during the South African war, and no fines levied which were not subsequently refunded *in toto*.

Throughout his career Napoleon acted, and somewhat successfully, on the principle of making each war pay for itself. During his Italian campaigns he usually marched with few or no supplies of his own, and obliged the provinces he subjugated to feed and clothe his famished and ill-clad battalions.[1] But in the nineteenth century another practice was adopted. It became usual to regard requisitions as a supplementary resource, and not as the main support of the invaders. Moreover, receipts, or *bons de réquisition*, were frequently given in acknowledgment of the exactions made with the object of protecting holders against fresh and unreasonable requisitions on the part of succeeding commanders. The amount of the requisition was still, however, left to the discretion of the belligerents, and no restriction whatever was yet placed upon the demands which they might think fit to make, nor was the proportion between the resources of the country affected and the burden imposed taken into consideration. The receipts given carried with them no guarantee of reimbursement.

In modern wars civilized armies have usually been accompanied by huge trains of supplies and other provisions, but even when thus furnished their exactions have sometimes been gigantic. The following is a list of the *daily* supplies requisitioned by the German troops quartered at Versailles during the siege of Paris in the winter of 1870-1871 :

| | |
|---|---|
| 80,000 pounds of meat. | 27,000 pounds of rice. |
| 4,500 gallons of wine. | 7,000 pounds of roasted coffee. |
| 120,000 loaves. | 4,000 pounds of salt. |
| 90,000 pounds of oats. | 500,000 cigars. |

Throughout the theatre of war similar exactions were made, not only by the Germans, but by the French armies from their own countrymen. It has been estimated that in a war which lasted only six months, the occupied districts of France were mulcted in goods of all kinds to the tune of £16,000,000.[2]

[1] Fyffe, 'Modern Europe,' i., 116, 117.

[2] These might under certain circumstances be continued even after the conclusion of peace. *Cf.* Article VIII. of Treaty, May 10, 1871 : 'German troops shall continue to abstain from levying contributions, either in kind or money, in the occupied territories; that obligation on their part being correlative to the obligations contracted for their maintenance by the

The Hague Regulations, however, laid down in 1899 certain rules with regard to commandeering. That war must support war remains a principle under these regulations also, but this principle is somewhat modified by the plea that the enemy State, and not the enemy individual, should be called upon to support the war, and that requisitions should only be imposed to the extent required by military necessity. Public property may be appropriated as heretofore, but requisitions from individuals should be either paid for in cash or acknowledged by receipt.[1]

The practice of the British army in war has been to pay for all supplies for the use of troops taken from the inhabitants. This practice was continued during the Boer war. At the commencement supplies or property taken were paid for in cash; but payment in cash became difficult as the theatre of hostilities increased in extent, and the troops became dispersed over an ever-widening area. Consequently, on December 17, 1900, an Army Order was published suspending payment for supplies requisitioned until the termination of hostilities, but ordering that receipts on a prescribed form should in all cases be given.[2] In spite of this order, however, receipts were constantly honoured by the various army departments—such as Ordnance, Supplies, and Remounts—during the war; and it is impossible to state how much money was expended in this connection, because the various sums disbursed were allocated to the departments concerned. The figures to be given later only apply to the amount paid out on military receipts some months after the conclusion of peace by the Central Judicial Commission.[3]

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French Government. In case the French Government, notwithstanding the reiterated demands of the German Government, is behindhand in the execution of the said obligations, the German troops will have the right to procure what is necessary to their wants by levying taxes and contributions in the occupied departments, and even outside of them, should their resources not be sufficient.'

[1] Hague Convention, Articles LII. and LIII.

[2] South Africa, Army Order, 245.5.

[3] Between July and December, 1902, the sum of £1,600,000 appears to have been paid out against military receipts.

The payment of receipts was, however, not the only liability incurred by the British army during the war. On March 14 and 15, 1900, Lord Roberts issued two proclamations, which have since become notorious, in which he promised, with certain exceptions, protection of person and property to those burghers who should lay down their arms at once, and bind themselves by oath to abstain from further participation in the war.[1] In consequence of these proclamations a number of ex-burghers desisted from further hostilities. During the war also a number of ex-burghers voluntarily surrendered, whilst many others rendered material aid to the British forces, and suffered in consequence of their adhesion to the British cause. It was urged on behalf of these classes that they had merited some appreciation of their services beyond participating with all other ex-burghers in the benefits provided by Article X. The plea was felt to be a just one. In recognition of their services, these burghers were granted a special gratuity, and they became known as 'protected burghers.'

On the conclusion of peace, officers were appointed in different centres of both the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony to pay out military receipts. But in January, 1903, arrangements were made between the War Office and the Civil Government whereby the latter, in consideration of the payment of a sum which, together with the amount already paid out by the army since the cessation of hostilities in satisfaction of military receipts, amounted to £4,500,000, undertook all the work of paying the military receipts still outstanding, in addition to recompensing the protected burghers. It was decided that the balance remaining after the payment of military receipts out of the fund of £4,500,000 should be devoted to the remuneration of protected burghers; but, as a matter of fact, both the payment of receipts and the distribution of the gratuity were carried out concurrently.

It will possibly be gathered that under the circumstances described, the number of candidates for 'protected burgherships' was considerable. The principle which guided the

[1] These proclamations will be found quoted in Cd. 3028.

Claims Commissioners in determining who was to share in this much-coveted fund was whether the claimants had any special claim upon the generosity of His Majesty's Government, whether they were entitled to something more than the substantial relief granted to all our former enemies, whether they had shown any grounds for special consideration. In order to insure that the fund should not be abused, the services of certain military officers were placed at the disposal of the Civil Government, and every claim against the Protected Burgher Fund was investigated by the Resident Magistrate of each district in conjunction with one of these military officers. The protected burgher claims, after being investigated and assessed in this manner, were revised and finally adjudicated by the Central Judicial Commission. As in the case of repatriation, the relief contemplated by the grant of the protected burgher gratuity to be effective had to be prompt. Yet it was impossible to determine exactly the amount of that relief until all military receipts had been paid, and all the claims under this fund had been assessed.

While, however, years might have elapsed before data which would give mathematical accuracy could have been obtained, it was soon discovered that the fund was sufficiently large to pay protected ex-burghers 10s. in the £ upon the amount of their assessed claims. This amount was paid, and was accepted by the burghers in question in full satisfaction of their claims. In order to facilitate the method of distribution adopted, the sum of £7,850 8s. 6d. was provided out of colonial funds.

The payment of military receipts was carried out by the Civil Government on the lines previously laid down by the military authorities. It was concluded in October, 1904, and the amount paid out was £2,563,623 16s. 7d.

It was considered that the costs of investigating and paying the military receipts and claims against the £4,500,000 were a proper charge to be made against that fund. The balance remaining after paying 10s. in the £ on the assessments to protected burghers was sufficient to pay only part of such costs and expenses.

The distribution of the £4,500,000 was as follows:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Amount of fund ... ... ... ... ... | | | £4,500,000 | 0 0 |
| Supplement ... ... ... ... ... | | | 7,850 | 8 6 |
| Total amount for distribution ... | | | 4,507,850 | 8 6 |
| Paid in discharge of military receipts ... | £ 2,563,623 | s. d. 16 7 | | |
| Protected ex-burghers in Transvaal ... ... | 640,130 | 0 0 | | |
| Protected ex-burghers in Orange River Colony ... | 1,157,976 | 0 6 | | |
| Protected ex-burghers in territory ceded to Natal | 66,666 | 0 0 | | |
| Paid to protected ex-burghers under awards on their claims by Western Districts Special Commission ... ... | 30,183 | 15 0 | | |
| Paid to Intercolonial Treasurer in repayment of part of costs of investigating and paying military receipts and claims again this fund | 49,270 | 16 5 | | |
| | | | £4,507,850 | 8 6 |

From the somewhat bald statement of compensation given above, it is possible to trace a very rapid development in British generosity. The Terms of Vereeniging implied repatriation, and nothing more. From the restoration of the ex-burghers to their homes, however, and assisting them to recommence their former avocations, there sprang the idea of compensating losses. First, the British subjects, foreign subjects and natives, had suffered as well as the ex-burghers. The British taxpayer provided as a free gift £2,000,000 for distribution among them. Next, some ex-burghers had a claim for specially generous treatment. The British taxpayer was again responsive, and the balance of the £4,500,000 remaining, after payment of all military receipts, was provided for distribution amongst those ex-burghers. Relief begat compensation, and the compensation became practically universal. After being given to British subjects and foreigners, it was extended to natives, and later to certain classes of ex-burghers.

History affords no precedent for compensation under conditions similar to those in South Africa. After the conclusion of the Franco-German war, France paid compensation to a portion of her people; but in no case was compensation paid to German subjects resident in France, although they remained neutral. The war of 1870-1871 had ravaged some departments only; the property of the people resident in the remaining departments had, generally speaking, not been injured. It was obviously unfair to cast the greater part of the burden on only a portion of the citizens. Consequently, the forced loans raised from, and damages inflicted on, the citizens of the north-eastern and other departments were recouped in whole or in part to those citizens out of the public purse, and thus the burden of the war was distributed over the whole country. The object of the payment in this case, therefore, was not compensation, but the equalization of loss. In Alsace and Lorraine Germany compensated some of the people out of the war indemnity paid by France. In all previous cases the payment of compensation has tended to produce equilibrium in the country concerned. Compensation payable out of the public purse equitably distributed the burden of the war over the whole country, and the taxpayers thereof. Were not compensation payable, the burden of war would be unequally distributed. This reasoning as a basis for the payment of compensation is not, however, applicable to the present case. The funds, the distribution of which has been described, were in the nature of free grants by the Imperial Parliament, and were not payable by, or out of the funds of, the two new colonies. Therefore, the incidence of the war and the distribution of the war's burdens were borne, not by the people of the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony, but by the taxpayers of Great Britain.

The compensation granted in South Africa was not only generous, but general. Restrictions and limitations were from time to time drawn up, but they were repeatedly broken. It has already been seen that 'large firms' were originally excluded from, but later admitted to, compensation. The

guiding principle was that every claim, of whatsoever kind, was carefully considered and assessed on its merits, and thus the population benefited, not only collectively, but as individuals. Money was disbursed with no niggard hand and in no grudging spirit. It was not a case of dispensing justice and holding the scales between opposed parties, where generosity to the one might be injustice to the other. It was the disbursement of the bounty of Great Britain to the peoples of the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony. According to the wording of Article X., it was clearly intended that the amount of relief granted to each man from the £3,000,000 fund was to be determined in a large measure by the amount of his actual war losses. The substantial assistance given throughout to the bijwoner class has been described. The majority of bijwoners would, strictly speaking, have had some difficulty in proving assessable war losses, because the landowners invariably supplied plant, seed, and capital for the working of the land. But the bijwoner's right—even though he could not prove any assessable loss—to share in the bounty of the £3,000,000 could not reasonably be questioned. No technicalities were allowed to stand in the way of rendering assistance to those who really required it.

There was a startling departure from precedents in the work of compensation as carried out in South Africa. One of the leading judgments of the British-American Commission of 1871 was given in the case of a claim in respect of plundering and destruction by General Grant's army while encamped on the claimant's farm. The unanimous decision of that Commission was that 'the acts done upon which this claim is based seem to have been the ordinary results incidental to the march of an invading army in a hostile territory, with possibly some unauthorized acts of destruction and pillage by the soldiery, with no proof of appropriation by the United States. Under such circumstances there is no ground for a valid claim against the United States. The claim is therefore disallowed.' Had this important precedent, which was both sound and just, been followed in South Africa, the area of compensation

would have been reduced by more than one half. After the war of 1871 the French Government distinguished claims in respect of forced loans and contributions raised by the Germans from claims arising from other causes. The former were paid in full. With regard to the latter, claimants who could prove intentional damage ultimately received 54 per cent. of their admitted claims; claimants who suffered losses from the fortunes of war received 30 per cent. of their admitted claims. No distinction was made in South Africa between the causes of war losses, except that receipts given by the military officers in the field were paid the assessed value in full.

In respect of promptitude the payment of compensation in South Africa constitutes, so far as I have been able to discover, a record. Under Article XII. of the Treaty between Great Britain and the United States of America, dated May 8, 1871, a Commission was appointed to inquire into and settle certain claims which arose out of the Civil War of 1865. The first meeting of that Commission was held on September 26, 1871. Its last meeting was held on September 25, 1873, exactly two years later. The number of claims dealt with by that Commission was 497; the total amount of awards made was £390,000. The South African Deportation Commission, which sat in London, to deal with the claims of subjects of the friendly Powers who had been deported, held its first meeting on April 30, 1901, and it completed its labours on November 13, 1901. During that period it adjudicated upon 227 claims. In France, after the war of 1870-1871, the first Act dealing with compensation was passed in 1871. The last payments were made in 1879. The Central Judicial Commission was appointed on October 30, 1902, and its final report was dated February 28, 1906. During a period of three and a third years it investigated and adjudicated upon 63,079 claims, and disbursed sums amounting to £9,500,000.

And yet the task of compensation, excessively heavy in the first instance, was not rendered less difficult by the circumstances under which it was undertaken. The difficulties of investigation were increased by the disturbing factors due to the

unsettlement of the people by the war. It would probably be impossible to find any white people so absolutely illiterate as the Boers. Some claimants, indeed, carefully prepared their claims and submitted reasonable evidence to support them; but the vast majority of claims were sent in in a most slip-shod manner. They were not specific, but vague and indefinite, and unsupported by sufficient evidence. This conduct on the part of claimants was due in many cases to carelessness and ignorance, in many more to dishonesty. The commissioners had to prevent exaggeration; they had to defeat fraud. Identification, again, was frequently far from simple. Amongst the population very many bore the same Christian and family or surnames. In very many cases, too, the addresses and the names of the farms of claimants were the same. To give but one instance, in one district alone there were seventy-six persons of the same name.

With regard to the mode of payment, the convenience of the claimants was the first consideration. The area of the two colonies was great; the means of locomotion were both difficult and expensive. It was, therefore, evident that, if the people were to derive the full benefits of the generosity of the Imperial Government, payment could not be centralized. The payment of all claims was made at the principal centre of each district in both the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony. Thus, no claimant was subjected to expense, hardship, or delay in receiving payment of his claim. Claimants were paid, so far as the conditions of the country allowed, practically at their own door by cheques cashable at the local bank, without deduction for exchange or any other charges.

In some cases the claims for compensation were fairly put forward and reasonably supported by evidence, but in very many more the term fair and reasonable could not be applied. The fixing of exorbitant values was the rule rather than the exception. A large number of claims were fictitious and dishonest. It was markedly apparent that the ordinary reliance placed upon testimony on oath could not in the cases

of many of the claimants be given.[1] Many claimants displayed the greatest ingenuity in framing their claims. Claims which were inflated, not *bonâ fide*, or fantastic were numerous. An amusing list will be found in the report to which I have previously referred, and on which this chapter is mainly based. I can only here give a few examples.

One claimant asked compensation for war losses. On investigation it was found, and claimant under examination on oath admitted, 'I started the war with nothing, and I lost nothing.'

One spinster claimed compensation for 'loss of honour,' because the man with whom she was cohabiting had during the war been deported by the military authorities.

Another claimant asked that he be paid £500 compensation for war losses because he was captured and was detained as a prisoner of war. The sum of £500 he arrived at by asking payment at the rate of 10s. per diem during the whole period of his detention and maintenance by the British authorities as a prisoner of war.

Another claimant asked that he be paid compensation for war losses for clothes worn and food consumed while he was on commando.

Another claimant asked that he be paid compensation for certain fowls which appear to have been killed and eaten. He also asked that a sum of £45 be paid to him for the value of the eggs which the fowls might have laid had they not been destroyed. He also asked that, in addition to the value of the fowls and the value of the eggs which those fowls might have laid had they not been turned into an article of diet, he

[1] 'All colonists are agreed that the Boers are hospitable. They are also agreed that they are double-faced liars' ('A Subaltern's Letters to his Wife,' p. 104).

'The Boer, who will perjure himself deeply to save a shilling, will part with a pound's worth of entertainment without a thought' ('The African Colony,' p. 73).

'There seemed such a cheery readiness to help one another by giving evidence as to the possession and value of the stock that one could not but be suspicious. If any number of the affidavits we took were accurate, then the Boers have the finest memories in the world; if inaccurate, they have the makings of a nation of novelists' (Senekal Report).

be paid the sum of £509 for 'moral indemnification' for the loss of the fowls.

In another case, which is typical of a class wherein values were grossly exaggerated, the claimant, a resident in the country, asked that he be paid £900 for two wardrobes with dresses, £100 for one arm-chair, and £25 for one stool.[1]

In another case, which is typical of a numerous class, a claimant submitted as evidence in support of his claim for war losses receipts signed by officers of the Boer forces, and purporting to have been signed on various dates during the period of the war, and on oath gave evidence that such receipts were signed and given to him during the war. On investigation it was proved, and claimant subsequently admitted, that the receipts were signed after peace was declared and antedated, and that his previous evidence on oath was untrue.

In another case a Boer officer submitted in support of his own claim for compensation receipts in his favour signed by himself.

In another case, which is typical of many others, claimant asked that he be paid a large sum for compensation for the value of crops which he might have been able to raise had he been able to plant his market-garden with vegetables during the war.

The reader may wish to know what effect this vast expenditure had upon the Boer mind, and the British taxpayer may reasonably inquire if the distribution of his bounty has done anything to reconcile the Boers to their new government. The answer is that the payment of compensation produced more dissatisfaction and ill-feeling than probably any other measure.[2] The Boer, instead of accepting his defeat like a

[1] 'The more the magistrates cut down the claims for compensation, the more claims not already sent in tend in the direction of extravagance, because the idea goes abroad that the claimant will get at least some proportion of what he asks; therefore the more he asks the more he is likely to get' (*Contemporary Review*, November, 1903).

[2] 'The process of distribution has already taken four years, and has begotten endless heart-burnings, wholesale laziness, and a portentous amount of perjury' (*The Times*, September 4, 1906).

'All the people are waiting to hear how much compensation they are

man and trying to make the best of a bad job, proceeded to whine over British perfidy. Dissatisfaction was rife; and it was freely stated that Great Britain, after cajoling the Boers to lay down their arms by certain promises, proceeded deliberately to break those promises. The whole scheme of compensation was generally misconstrued. In the Boer mind war had always been associated with gain; it had meant free farms, unlimited loot, and innumerable herds. It was a rude awakening for the Boer to find himself worse off in 1902 than he had been in 1899. By a process of reasoning which is not quite clear to the ordinary mind he came to the conclusion that his late enemy was morally and legally bound to recoup him in full for what he had lost. Starting with this assumption, he proceeded to put a wholly inexplicable and unjustifiable interpretation upon the Terms of Vereeniging.

The idea was generally prevalent among the ex-burghers, who have seldom found any difficulty in arriving at a conclusion favourable to themselves, that the £3,000,000 mentioned in the Terms of Surrender were to be paid in compensation for war losses, that the moneys expended by the local commissions on repatriation and relief were not compensation, and that £3,000,000 still remained untouched. All classes in the community entertained the erroneous belief that they were entitled to compensation and indemnification which would place them in as flourishing, or even more flourishing, a position than they occupied before the war. The Boer expected, or pretended to expect, that any exorbitant claim which he, with the aid of his attorney, might think fit to submit would be met in full, and when this was not done he complained bitterly. The inevitable delay in the payment of claims, which was largely due to the fact that many of the local Dutch commissioners

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likely to get before they start sowing or doing anything to put their property in good order again. If the Compensation Board had never existed, this district would now be in a far more prosperous condition than it is, and the sooner the burghers receive what is due to them and become disappointed, the sooner will they find out that they must put their shoulders to the wheel and do a little work' (extract from Fauresmith Report for July, 1903).

could neither read nor write, was very generally confounded with niggardliness of intention. Accustomed under a previous régime to see funds disappear into the blue, the Boer press did not hesitate to suggest that the funds devoted to compensation were being pocketed by the Claims Commissioners, and that the transaction would later be covered by a 'fairy-tale Blue-Book.' The system of allowing protected burghers to obtain prompt relief by giving them at once 50 per cent. of their assessed claims was generally regarded as a swindle.

In fact, it is generally true to say that Boer discontent may be relied upon to increase *pari passu* with British generosity. How long Great Britain will continue to pursue towards this much overrated race a policy of conciliation and magnanimity which has repeatedly failed, which has tended to depress her friends and to inspire her foes, which is antagonistic to the true interests of South Africa, and which threatens the integrity of the Empire, still remains to be seen.

# APPENDICES

A. CIRCULAR AS TO METHOD OF KEEPING ACCOUNTS.

B. TERMS FOR LAND SETTLERS.

C (I.). CLOSE OF REPATRIATION AND INSTITUTION OF RELIEF.

C (II.). CLOSE OF REPATRIATION AND INSTITUTION OF RELIEF.

D. EXTENSION OF RELIEF.

E. 'ACKNOWLEDGMENTS OF INDEBTEDNESS.'

F. STAFF EMPLOYED.

G. STATEMENT OF EXPENDITURE.

H (I.). INSTRUCTIONS ISSUED REGARDING CLAIMS.

H (II.). INSTRUCTIONS ISSUED REGARDING CLAIMS.

# APPENDIX A

(Original Circular H.)

GOVERNMENT OFFICES,
BLOEMFONTEIN,
21*st June*, 1902.

CIRCULAR AS TO METHOD OF KEEPING ACCOUNTS.

To the Chairman of.....District Repatriation Commission.

With reference to Paragraph 10 of the Regulations already communicated to you, I have the honour to request your attention to the following instructions as to keeping the accounts of the cash and stock transactions of the commission in your district. It is imperative that a uniform system should be in force in all districts of the Orange River Colony, and that you should not depart from the lines therein laid down unless specially instructed to do so by the secretary or chief accountant of the Central Board.

1. To record the cash transactions, it will be necessary for you to employ a cash book and sales book (day book) and a ledger, in which to post the entries of the other two. This ledger should contain as far as possible the personal and impersonal accounts.

Cash books will be forwarded to you with double money columns, the outer one of which should be utilized as a bank column. All moneys received should be shown, such as remittances from Central Board, under head 'Imprests'; cash received for goods sold under 'Stock and Stores Account'; and 'Repayment of Loans Account' when the time arrives for such repayment under 'Loans.' The expenditure should be shown under the heads and subheads specified on attached form, R 10, a separate ledger account being opened for each head and subhead.

2. *Administration 'A,' Personal Emoluments*, should include salaries of the commissioners and secretary and such other officials as may be sanctioned by the Central Board.

3. *Administration 'B,' Travelling Expenses.*—Transport and subsistence allowances other than salaries to all officials included under 2.

4. *Administration 'C,' Other Charges*, will embrace rent of office, stationery, office requisites, bank charges, contingencies, etc.

5. Under the head of *Loans* should be included *cash* advances to applicants, which shall be debited to each individual as a personal account, and which will be repaid in whole or part at some future date. The total of these personal advances will, of course, represent the amount of loan advanced in cash.

6. *Stock and Stores Account 'A,' Cash Purchases.*—It is hoped that nearly all supplies obtained from military authorities, etc., will be paid direct by the Central Board; and it is not contemplated that goods to any great amount will be purchased, or, at any rate, paid for, by the district commissions. It may, however, be necessary to procure small articles at short notice to complete a loan in kind, and all such purchases should be paid for immediately on receipt of same, and debited to subhead 'A.'

7. *Stock and Stores Account 'B,' Grazing and Herding*, will be debited with the salaries and other expenses of caretakers and herds, etc., who may be employed by the commissions at any time.

8. *Stock and Stores Account 'C,' Railage and In-transit Dues* should include all sums paid by local commissions for transport of goods received by them, also loading charges, etc.

9. *Stock and Stores Account 'D,' Repairs.*—Repairs to vehicles, harness, implements, etc., should form a charge on this subhead.

The above, so far as can be seen at present, will embrace all the cash transactions with which you will be required to deal.

10. *Sales Book.*—This book, which is marked 'Day Book' on the book to be sent you, should contain a full and complete record of the stock and stores advanced on loan to each applicant, the prices of same being fixed by the commission, and the total amount of each allotment should be posted into the ledger as a personal account, showing the full name and address of the applicant. The total of the personal accounts posted from the sales book should represent the amount of loan advanced in *kind*, in the same way as the advances which are posted from the cash book represent the total

amount advanced in cash. In most cases persons will receive loans partly in cash and partly in goods, in which case the necessary entries will be made in both cash and sales books and postings made to the same personal account.

11. *The Ledger* should be balanced monthly with the cash and sales books.

12. A copy of the cash book and cash statement, form 10, together with the various receipt returns (A 1) and expenditure (B 5 and A 17) and bank certificates, should be forwarded as soon as possible after the last day of each month to the Secretary of the Central Board.

13. Receipt returns and expenditure vouchers should be numbered according to the cash book entries, but all vouchers under each subhead should be attached to a schedule (No. W 23), on which each is specifically stated.

A separate schedule should be used for each subhead, and the total of each schedule should agree with the amount shown on form R 10 as charged against that particular subhead.

A certificate signed by the local manager of the bank should be attached, and where the amount so stated does not agree with the balance of the cash book, an adjustment balance should be furnished.

14. Payment of all accounts should be made by cheques, except in the case of those districts where there is no branch of a bank.

15. Besides the above main books, it will be necessary to keep subsidiary store books to record the transactions of stock and stores as regards the quantities of each separate kind of article.

Such books will be the following :

(*a*) *Receipts and Issues Books.*—In these books on the one side should be inserted full particulars of each consignment of stock and stores received by you, whether paid for or not, and your book should be so ruled as to show 'Date of Receipt,' 'From whom received,' 'Particulars of Consignment,' 'No. of Invoice,' and 'No. of Stock and Ledger Folio.' On the other side should be shown each issue made by order of the commission, whether by way of loan or cash sale, of which it will be necessary to give the following particulars : 'Date,' 'To whom issued,' 'Specification of Goods,' 'No. of Receipt signed by Applicant,' and 'No. of Stock and Ledger Folio.'

A specimen sheet of this proposed book is annexed (X). The

printing of these books would involve great delay, but a blank book which can be ruled by hand in the manner required is transmitted.

(*b*) *Ledger.*—A separate account should be opened in the stock ledger for each separate article included under the head of 'Stock and Stores,' and to that particular head should be posted the numbers shown as received or issued in the transactions embodied in the receipts and issue book. A specimen page of this book is annexed (Y), and for the present it will have to be ruled locally in a further MS. book enclosed.

A monthly return should be compiled from these ledger entries on form No. B 20, and forwarded, along with the cash and other statements and vouchers, to the Secretary of the Central Board.

It must be noted that the articles referred to in these store books and statement will probably vary in different districts, and that, in order to meet this, blank lines have been left in the statement for such further articles as may require enumeration.

16. It should be clearly understood that the transactions of the commissions should be kept entirely distinct from the ordinary accounts kept by the magistrates, and that a separate account should be opened at the local bank under the title 'Repatriation Account,' cheques on which should be signed by both the accountant and the president of the commission.

(Signed) H. J. McLaughlin, Major,
Secretary, Central Repatriation Board.

## APPENDIX B

### Terms for Land-Settlers.

Government owns land for settlement in almost every district in the Orange River Colony, partly inherited from the late Government and partly recently purchased.

The farms range from small holdings of irrigated land in the vicinity of towns, suitable for market-gardening, up to large grazing farms in the western districts.

In the mixed farming districts to the east of the railway-line the farms are from 500 to 1,000 morgen; price from 30s. to 50s. per morgen (though a particularly well-situated farm in the conquered territory may go up to 70s. per morgen).

In the western districts the farms are from 1,000 morgen upwards; price from 15s. to 30s. per morgen.

The following is a summary of the terms upon which farms will be offered for settlement in the Orange River Colony:

1. Farms can be taken either on lease for five years, renewable for another period of five or ten years, or on the thirty years' purchase system.

2. If taken on lease, the rent will be equal to 5 per cent. of the Government valuation of the farm, payable half-yearly.

3. If taken on the thirty years' purchase system, the farm will be paid for by 60 half-yearly instalments, the total amount payable annually being $5\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. of the purchase price. Of this amount 4 per cent. is interest on the outstanding balance of the debt, and $1\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. goes to paying off the debt, which is thus extinguished in thirty years. On a farm value £1,000, the total annual payment will thus be £57 10s., payable in two half-yearly instalments.

4. Half-yearly instalments are payable in advance, but the first

instalment will not fall due until the settler has been in occupation of the farm for twelve months.

5. After five years' occupation, the settler can pay off the whole amount outstanding and acquire the freehold.

6. If a settler dies before the completion of the purchase, his rights and liabilities pass to his male heir or his widow, provided they are capable of carrying on the farm. Failing this, the farm may be transferred, provided the new holder is approved by Government.

7. Government will make advances for permanent improvements, the purchase of stock or implements, or any other approved purpose, up to the amount invested by the settler, but not exceeding half the value of the farm. These advances are repayable with 5 per cent. interest by twenty half-yearly instalments.

8. Land must be occupied personally.

9. Government reserves to itself the perpetual property in gold, silver, and precious stones.

10. Farms will be allotted by ballot among approved applicants, preference being given to men who have served in the war.

A capital of at least £1 per morgen is required to start farming in this colony, and for the present farms will only be allotted to those who have sufficient capital to make a start.

## APPENDIX C (I.)

(Original G.O. No. 26.)

*O.R.C. Land Board (Repatriation).*

GOVERNMENT OFFICES,
BLOEMFONTEIN,
*April 8th*, 1903.

CIRCULAR CLOSING DOWN REPATRIATION DEPARTMENT AND INSTITUTING GOVERNMENT RELIEF DEPARTMENT.

The Chairman,
Repatriation Commission,

.....

SIR,

I have the honour to inform you, by direction of H.E. the Lieutenant-Governor, that it has been decided that the Repatriation Department as such shall cease from April 30.

The local Repatriation Commissions will continue their work in connection with ex-burgher claims (Fund A), though probably reduced in each case to two, or at the most three, members; but they will cease as from that date to deal with any other questions concerning repatriation. Their present chairman, or such other person as His Excellency may appoint in that capacity, will still deal with the question of food-supplies, and it is the intention of H.E. the Lieutenant-Governor to start a new department which will take over and deal with it. Each chairman will be authorized to continue his staff until such time as the present stock and stores now on hand shall have been materially reduced, and it is not proposed to issue any more of these, with the exception of rations and seed, beyond those already on order.

The system of accounts will be, so far as can be seen, the same as at present; but as the stock and stores now on hand are gradually

reduced without being replaced, its scope will be very much curtailed, and as this reduction proceeds it will no doubt be possible to reduce the existing establishments.

His Excellency proposes that a number of waggons and teams, not exceeding 5 (five) per district, should be retained for cases of emergency, and that all the rest of the waggons and transport animals should be disposed of to farmers in their several districts.

As the work of repatriation proper is now practically concluded, His Excellency is of opinion that all that is left to be done is to render assistance to such persons as may be actually in need of it to enable them to tide over the period of scarcity occasioned by the late drought, and the work of the new department should be confined as far as possible to this object. Relief will, of course, be granted on the same lines as heretofore—viz., on acknowledgment of indebtedness, with a promise to repay in the event of being called upon to do so. In the case of persons who are unlikely to be able ever to redeem this promise, endeavour should be made to induce them to take work in one or other of the Government relief camps, and where possible wheeled transport should be provided for this purpose.

Please acknowledge.

I have, etc.,

(Signed) H. J. McLaughlin, Lieut.-Colonel,
Secretary O.R.C. Land Board (Repatriation).

## APPENDIX C (II.)

(Original G.O. No. 30.)

*O.R.C. Land Board (Repatriation).*

Government Offices,
Bloemfontein,
*April 26th*, 1903.

Sir,

With reference to Circular G.O. 26, I am instructed to inform you that the Repatriation Department will be known from 1st May next onwards as 'Government Relief Department,' O.R.C. Telegrams 'Assistance,' Bloemfontein.

The circular referred to above may be to a large extent modified at your discretion, so as to meet the requirements of your district.

While it is desirable that the ration list should be curtailed as much as possible, and that the principle of self-help should be severely inculcated, the authorities are not ignorant of the recent failure of crops and of the considerable amount of distress which still exists in many districts.

Every endeavour should be made to induce the able-bodied to labour, and a list of the relief camps and public works to which they may be sent will shortly be forwarded to you.

The issue of rations in deserving cases must, however, be left to your discretion, and it is not expedient that anyone should be allowed to suffer.

It is not intended that the new Relief Department shall purchase largely, but seed wheat, oats, and barley will be supplied for the present sowing, and 1,500 bags of seed mealies have been ordered and are due to arrive about the end of June. I hope to issue some 30,000 Merino ewes during next month.

I have, etc.,
(Signed) G. B. Beak,
Asst. Sec. O.R.C. Land Board (Repatriation).

The Chairman,
Repatriation Commission,

## APPENDIX D

(Original G.O. No. 52.)

### Extension of Relief.

Government Relief Department, O.R.C.,
Bloemfontein,
*August 30th*, 1903.

1. In view of the prolonged drought and the consequent almost complete failure of the wheat crop, the Government has decided that the present system of relief will have to be extended in both time and scope.

2. While it is inexpedient that all the able-bodied should be rationed, it is equally inadvisable that all those who have land to cultivate should be compelled to go to the relief works. Those whose crops have failed, but who will be able to plough and sow again, should be rationed until the next crops are reaped. A great amount of discrimination will have to be used in dealing with the present exceptional situation, and each individual necessitous case should be carefully inquired into and decided on its merits. It is impossible at headquarters to be fully acquainted with local conditions, and it is consequently difficult to lay down hard-and-fast rules. The question of relief, or relief work, within the limits of the general principle enunciated above, is therefore left to a large extent in the hands of the district administrators, who are expected to exercise a wise discretion. In some cases it may be desirable to leave one or two members of a large family upon the farm, while the remainder are sent to the relief works.

3. As is done at the present time, groceries and other medical comforts may be issued, either in addition to or in substitution for the ordinary ration, on medical certificate, which need not necessarily be confined to cases of actual sickness.

4. A supply of seed mealies and seed potatoes will be issued to those unable to pay for them, but the usual receipt on the R.B. 10 form will be taken as heretofore from each recipient. No charge will be made for ploughing, but those for whom land is ploughed will be called upon to supply the necessary labour in connection therewith. The animals will in all cases be under the supervision of conductors employed by the department. Great care should be taken to see that seed is not used for food. An order for a considerable quantity of vegetable seeds has been given, and these seeds should reach the districts by about the middle of November.

5. Help in ploughing and seed may be extended to all ex-burghers who need it, and land-settlers (when recommended by the Secretary of the Land Settlement Department) may be assisted with draught animals on equal terms with the ex-burgher.

6. In several districts a considerable amount of distress exists among the native population. It is not expedient that natives should have to pay the practically prohibitive prices frequently charged them by local traders. Natives who have the wherewithal should be allowed to make cash purchases at the depots of this department. Natives employed on farms may be rationed if payment is guaranteed by their employers. In necessitous cases a free grant may be given.

7. The only alteration which Paragraphs 4 and 5 will necessitate in the present system of accounts is that no personal accounts need be kept for issues to destitute burghers and destitute natives. R.B. 10 forms, filled in for such issues, and signed by the recipient, should be distinctly marked either 'Destitute Burghers' or 'Native Repatriation,' as the case may be, and the value of these should be inserted in the free grant column of the monthly return R.B. 10 A.

Administrators will sign each of these vouchers as a guarantee that the issues have been made only in cases of *bonâ-fide* distress, and that the value of each issue is as stated.

(Signed) G. B. Beak,
Assistant Director,
Government Relief Department, O.R.C.

# APPENDIX E

## Acknowledgments of Indebtedness.

Government Relief Department, O.R.C.,
Bloemfontein,
*November 19th*, 1903.

With reference to Paragraph 7 of G.O. 52, it is now considered possible to make a beginning in striking off charge those items of rations and small quantities of seeds issued for which the money is unlikely to be recovered.

In view of the fact that nearly all claims have now been assessed administrators should have little difficulty in estimating which people will be in a position to pay, at all events, a portion of the amount due, and which will be unable to do so. They will naturally, however, take into consideration in the case of each individual any sources, other than those of compensation, whence funds may be received by him.

At the end of each month a return, accompanied by the particulars required on the attached sheet, together with any additional information which may be of assistance in arriving at a true estimate of the financial position of the persons concerned, should be rendered to this office of those about whose inability to pay administrators have no doubt. Such returns will then be submitted to the Executive Council for approval before any definite action is taken on them.

This course of action will, it is hoped, lighten considerably the work of accounting in each district.

(Signed) G. B. Beak,
Assistant Director,
Government Relief Department.

Administrator of Relief,

.....

Name.

Place of residence.

Age.

Sex.

Married or single.

Diseased or able-bodied.

Children, if any, and ages, whether married or single, and if living with their parents.

Amount owing to the department.

Amount recommended for compensation, and from what fund.

Present financial position.

Financial prospects, if any, other than compensation.

Remarks.

## APPENDIX F

### Return showing Number of Staff employed.

*List of Staff paid under the Head Administration 'A.'*

| | |
|---|---|
| Members of the Central Board. ... ... ... | 4 at £6 per week for 11 months. |
| Members of the District Boards ... ... ... | 23 districts, with 4 to 6 members forming each Board, paid at the rate of £1 per diem at the commencement and latterly £1 per meeting. |
| Chairmen of the Local Boards ... ... ... | 18 out of the 23 were Resident Magistrates of the districts, and drew pay at the rate of £1 per diem. From November, 1903, Administrators of Relief at a salary of £400 to £500 were appointed in their place. |
| Secretary of the Central Board ... ... ... | (Director of the Government Relief Department). £1,000 per annum, plus £7 per month forage allowance. |
| Assistant Secretary ... | £600 per annum. |
| Chief Accountant ... ... | £800 per annum. |
| Auditor ... ... ... | £600 per annum. |
| Secretary's Staff ... ... | 6 at salaries ranging from £300 to £200 per annum. |
| Accountant's Staff ... | 6 at salaries ranging from £375 to £200 per annum. |
| Auditor's Staff ... ... | 4 inspectors—1 at £500 and 3 at £400; and 2 examiners of accounts —1 at £300 per annum and 1 at £365 per annum. |
| Messengers ... ... | 2 natives. |

| | |
|---|---|
| District Commission's Office Staff ... ... ... | Secretary and accountant, £1 per diem; issuer, £10 to £20 per month; stock and transport overseer, £10 to £20 per month; 1 native messenger; registrar of claims up to November, 1903. |

*Head Office Staff.*

| | |
|---|---|
| Chief Storeman ... ... | £25 to £30 per month. |
| Assistant Storeman ... | £17 10s. per month. |
| Clerk to Storeman ... | £22 10s. per month. |
| Transport Inspector, one at | £500 per annum. |
| Transport Inspector, one at | £1 per diem. |
| Veterinary Surgeon, one at | £600 per annum. |
| Veterinary Surgeon, two at | £450 per annum for 15 months. |
| Agent at Cape Town ... | £40 per month. |

The above were all reduced as circumstances permitted.

# APPENDIX G

## Statement of Expenditure, Orange River Colony Repatriation Department, up to 30th June, 1905.

### Receipts.

| | £ | s. | d. | £ | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *To Imprests from Colonial Treasurer, Transvaal* (including stock and stores taken over from Transvaal Repatriation Department) ... | 2,106,939 | 14 | 0 | | | |
| *Less* repaid ... ... ... | 163,764 | 17 | 0 | | | |
| | | | | 1,943,174 | 17 | 0 |
| To interest on loans ... ... | | | | 236 | 7 | 6 |
| | | | | £1,943,411 | 4 | 6 |

### Expenditure.

#### A. Loans.

| | £ | s. | d. | £ | s. | d. | £ | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Repatriation* ... | 1,254,287 | 8 | 1 | | | | | | |
| *Less* loans repaid | 259,171 | 19 | 1 | | | | | | |
| | | | | 995,115 | 9 | 0 | | | |
| British refugee aid | | | | 5,494 | 19 | 4 | | | |
| | | | | | | | 1,000,610 | 8 | 4 |

#### B. Other Charges.

*I.—Administration.*

| | £ | s. | d. | £ | s. | d. | £ | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Repatriation*— | | | | | | | | | |
| Claims Board ... | 3,247 | 5 | 9 | | | | | | |
| (*a*) Personal emoluments ... | 123,661 | 18 | 10 | | | | | | |
| (*b*) Travelling expenses ... | 12,399 | 0 | 10 | | | | | | |
| (*c*) Other charges | 9,930 | 7 | 8 | | | | | | |
| *British refugee aid*— | | | | | | | | | |
| (*a*) Personal emoluments ... | 359 | 0 | 11 | | | | | | |
| (*b*) Other charges | 135 | 10 | 4 | | | | | | |
| | | | | 149,733 | 4 | 4 | | | |

| | £ s. d. | £ s. d. | £ s. d. |
|---|---|---|---|
| *II. Transport and Railage.* | | | |
| Grazing and herding ... ... | 75,397 12 8 | | |
| Repairs... ... | 8,196 15 0 | | |
| Waggon transport ... ... | 101,414 7 10 | | |
| Railage... ... | 3,574 4 5 | | |
| | | £188,582 19 11 | |
| *III. Relief.* | | | |
| Hope Homes ... | 28,850 3 10 | | |
| Repatriation free grant (including assistance to indigent burghers, widows, orphans, and natives) ... | 70,021 13 0 | | |
| British refugee aid —grants ... | 6,037 5 5 | | |
| Relief works ... | 347,769 0 2 | | |
| | | 452,678 2 5 | |
| *IV. Losses.* | | | |
| Deaths, etc. ... | 119,865 11 0 | | |
| Stores and trading | 19,111 3 2 | | |
| Defalcations ... | 2,002 15 5 | | |
| | | 140,979 9 7 | |
| | | | 931,973 16 3 |
| *Advances* ... ... | | | 676 3 1 |
| *Balance in hand* ... | | | 10,150 16 10 |
| | | | £1,943,411 4 6 |

1. The department was nominally closed down in June, 1904, but the audit of repatriation accounts and the work of repatriation recoveries has since been carried on by a staff acting under the direction of the Treasury.

2. Since the compilation of the above accounts, a sum of £479,125 has been placed to the credit of subhead A, being the proportion of the Orange River Colony's share, amounting to £1,378,519 in the Imperial free grant of £3,000,000, appropriated to the reduction of debts owing by burghers to the Repatriation Department. The application of this sum reduces the total amount devoted to repatriation services in the O.R.C. to £1,454,135 7s. 8d., the balance of loans (subhead A) being reduced to £521,485 8s. 4d.

3. The final distribution of the free grant is based on the assessed claims of all ex-burghers, whether destitute or not.

## APPENDIX H (I.)

INSTRUCTIONS ISSUED TO THE LOCAL (REPATRIATION) COMMISSIONS AND RESIDENT MAGISTRATES BY THE CENTRAL JUDICIAL COMMISSION.

### INSTRUCTIONS ISSUED IN FEBRUARY, 1903.

1. I have the honour to inform you that it has been decided to introduce a radical change into the system by which claims for compensation for war losses, or for relief out of the free grants made by the Imperial Government to sufferers from the war, are dealt with.

2. Complaints have for some time been rife with reference to the delay in dealing with claims presented to Military Compensation Boards, as well as to the principles on which these claims have been dealt with. So far the Military Boards have only paid on claims based upon receipts given by competent military authorities. The payment of this class of claims is proceeding as fast as possible; but all other claims, even for losses sustained by persons claiming protection under the proclamations and promises of Lord Roberts and other military commanders, are being referred by the Military Boards to the Civil Commissions dealing with the £3,000,000 grant, and have in no case been paid by the military. Strong protests have been made by persons who had taken the oath of allegiance, or by other ex-burghers who had surrendered and placed themselves under military protection, against their claims being dealt with in precisely the same manner as those of persons who had no such special claim to consideration. They have argued that it was unjust to them to treat their claims simply as claims to a *pro rata* share in the relief granted to ex-burghers generally under Clause X. of the Terms of Surrender; that their claims were claims of right, based upon the promises of the military authorities, to the payment of

which they would have been entitled, even if the grant of £3,000,000 had never been made, and that these claims were not adequately dealt with simply by being admitted to participation in that grant.

3. His Majesty's Government have been impressed by this argument, and have decided that claims for war losses sustained by certain classes of ex-burghers shall be separately dealt with and assessed, and be paid, so far as money is available, out of a fund which has been placed by the War Office authorities at the disposal of the High Commissioner for this purpose, which, for the sake of convenience, may be known as the Military Compensation Fund.

4. There are, therefore, now three separate funds against which claims, apart from claims based upon receipts given by military authorities, may rank for payment—viz. :

A. The sum of £3,000,000 provided under Article X. of the Terms of Surrender.

B. The sum of £2,000,000 granted by the British Government for the relief of British subjects.

C. The Military Compensation Fund.

5. The existence of three distinct funds renders it necessary to define, as accurately as possible, the classes of claimants entitled to participate in each of them.

A. *The Grant of* £3,000,000.—The claimants entitled to share in this grant are all those ex-burghers of the two late Republics who have sustained war losses, and whose pecuniary circumstances are, or were at the time when peace was restored, such as to justify assistance being given to them out of the said grant to enable them to resume their occupations.

B. *The Grant of* £2,000,000.—The persons entitled to participate in this are British subjects, foreign subjects, and natives.

British subjects entitled to share in this grant comprise all persons—

(*a*) Who at the outbreak of the war were British subjects, and who rendered no assistance to the Governments or forces of either of the late Republics.

(*b*) Who, being originally British subjects, were placed on the burgher rolls of either of the late Republics without their consent ; who never exercised burgher rights or accepted any official post under the Government of either of the late Republics, and who rendered no

assistance to those Governments or their forces during the war.

(*c*) Who, being burghers, whether of British extraction or not, refused to take up arms against the British, at no time rendered any service to the Governments of the late Republics or their forces during the war, and took the earliest opportunity of actively identifying themselves with the British cause.

C. *The Military Compensation Fund.*—This fund is intended to deal with the war losses of ex-burghers, in respect of which compensation is claimed as a right on the ground of specific promises made by the military authorities. Receipts given by competent military authorities for goods taken by the military do not rank against the Military Compensation Fund, as they are being separately dealt with.

The following are the classes of ex-burghers entitled to share in the Military Compensation Fund, and who are hereinafter referred to as 'protected burghers':

(*a*) Those who voluntarily surrendered under a specific promise from any British officer that their property, or any portion of it, would be protected or respected, whether such promise or undertaking was made or given directly to the individual claimant or to a body of men collectively, provided always that any person who claims to have surrendered under such promise as aforesaid is proved to have done so on the faith of such promise, and at the first reasonable opportunity after such promise was made or became known to him.

(*b*) Those who rendered active assistance to His Majesty's forces.

Provided that no claim may be admitted against the Military Compensation Fund in respect of any loss prior to the date when the ex-burgher surrendered or began to render assistance to His Majesty's forces, or of any loss sustained by any ex-burgher who, subsequent to his surrender, rendered any assistance directly or indirectly to the enemy.

7. With the claims of foreign subjects you are not concerned, and any claims of this nature lodged with you should be forwarded at once to Colonel Edmonds, R.E., Pretoria.

8. As regards the claims of natives, with which, in the absence of a Native Commissioner, you may be called upon to deal, it is only necessary to say that the general instructions contained in this circular will, so far as necessary, be applicable.

9. Claims are to be investigated by the following persons :

*Claims to share in the Military Compensation Fund should have immediate consideration*, and will be assessed by you, assisted by one or more military officers who will be specially appointed for that purpose.

Claims for ex-burghers to participate in the grant of £3,000,000 will be assessed by the local Repatriation Commissions, as heretofore.

Claims to share in the grant of £2,000,000, if made by British subjects, will be assessed by the Resident Magistrates.

Claims made by subjects of any foreign Power will be assessed by the Judicial Commission.

Claims made by natives will be assessed by the Native Commissioner of the district in which the native resides, or, if there be no Native Commissioner, then by the Resident Magistrate of such district.

10. Your first care on the filing of a claim or in dealing with those already filed will be to scrutinize the claim and determine the fund against which it will rank. It is of the utmost importance that claims which rank in whole or in part against the Military Compensation Fund should be separated from the rest as soon as possible.

11. The claim of an ex-burgher, which ranks only against the £3,000,000 grant, should be endorsed on the outside cover 'Burgher'; that of a British subject or native should be endorsed with those words. A claim entitled to rank in whole or in part against the Military Compensation Fund should be endorsed 'Protected Burgher.'

12. Each claim of the different classes should be numbered consecutively.

The claims of each class should be kept separately, to be dealt with by the Repatriation Commissions, by yourself as Resident Magistrate, or by yourself in conjunction with the military officers above referred to, as the case may be.

13. It will often be the case that the same person will be entitled to share both in the grant of £3,000,000 and in the Military Compensation Fund—*e.g.*, a surrendered burgher entitled to share in

the latter fund may have a claim for losses prior to his surrender, in respect of which he would be entitled to participate in the grant of £3,000,000. In such case you should deal with the whole claim or claims of such person, in conjunction with the military officers already referred to, with a view to assessing separately the portion of his claim ranking against the Military Compensation Fund and the portion ranking against the £3,000,000.

As rapidity in disposing of claims is now of paramount importance, it is not intended that you should reconsider the items of claims which have already been assessed, but simply divide them, where such division is necessary, according to the funds against which they rank.

Where any person's claim or claims rank wholly against the £3,000,000 and have already been assessed, the case should not be reopened, but the amount assessed should simply be entered in the appropriate column in the schedule hereafter referred to. Unless it is absolutely necessary, claimants and other witnesses already once examined should not be recalled. The instructions contained in Paragraphs 20, 22, 28 of this circular should be read subject to this reservation. They are intended for your future guidance, but not intended to lead to the reopening of cases already dealt with.

14. It is not necessary that at the time of filing a claim should be supported by an affidavit. In some districts this has hitherto been insisted upon, and in some an affidavit of the truth of each division of the claim has been filed, thus putting the claimants to considerable expense. As a general rule, they are present at the hearing of their claims and give evidence on oath, so that prior affidavits appear to be quite unnecessary.

15. Where an authentic receipt for goods, etc., requisitioned by His Majesty's forces, which has not been paid out by the military authorities, is presented with any claim, it should be detached and forwarded to the military compensation officer for the district, except in the three following cases—namely :

(1) Where the receipt states that the goods, etc., in respect of which it was given were destroyed.

(2) Where the receipt was given in respect of arms and ammunition.

(3) Where the person to whom the receipt was given has been guilty of a breach of the oath of neutrality.

The receipts coming under Class 1 should be retained and treated as evidence of the loss of the goods specified for the purposes of the claim.

Receipts coming under Classes 2 and 3 should be retained with the claim, but no account should be taken of the goods specified therein for the purposes of the claim.

16. No claim should be allowed to rank, in whole or in part against the Military Compensation Fund unless it has been presented before the date of this circular, and no claim whatever shall be considered if presented after 1st April next; provided that if any claimant can satisfactorily establish that, owing to his late return to the country, or owing to illness, it was impossible for his claim to be filed before the date above mentioned, it may be assessed.

17. No claim presented before the several dates aforesaid should be rejected merely because it was not presented within the time prescribed in any proclamation which has been issued dealing with the subject of compensation; but any such claim may be rejected if it appear that the failure to present it within such prescribed time cannot be explained, and appears to indicate a fraudulent intention on the part of the claimant.

18. Every claim should be filed, even though it be one which, whether on account of its nature or the date on which it was presented, apparently cannot be accepted for assessment.

19. It is desirable in every case that the claimant should attend in person and give evidence; but if for any reason his attendance is impossible, or if his case is of an extremely clear nature (*e.g.*, if an ex-burgher claims for goods commandeered, and supports his claim by receipts), affidavits may be accepted. The affidavits should state the facts sufficiently to enable the court to decide on the justice of the claim, and that it is not one which would be barred under Paragraph 31.

20. Before including any person in the class of 'British subject' or 'Protected burgher,' you should carefully ascertain whether the facts are such as to bring him within the definition of these classes of persons as given above.

In such cases you should inquire whether the claimant has lodged any claim with any Military Board or Repatriation Commission, what the result of that claim was, whether he has received any payment in respect of it, and whether any of the items of the claim you

are investigating were included in any such other claim. Care should be taken to see that no item of loss is assessed more than once.

21. When a claim is in respect of the loss of horses or stock, the claimant should be examined particularly with a view to ascertaining whether they were acquired by him as booty or were lost by him whilst being used on commando. In a very large number of claims items of this character are included.

22. When a claim is based on Government notes, ascertain from whom the claimant received them, and what consideration was given by him for them.

23. Where the claim is in respect of damage to any building, the size, extent, number of rooms, and nature of material of which it is constructed should be ascertained.

24. A note should be taken of all material facts proved.

25. All receipts, notes, and other documents produced by a claimant should be numbered consecutively, and reference made in the notes of evidence to the number placed on each; every document received in evidence should be attached to the file of proceedings. Where a quantity of Government notes are produced, they should be fastened together and one number placed upon the packet.

26. Awards should be made in pounds only, odd sums of shillings and pence being disregarded.

27. The expenses of witnesses produced or required to attend by claimants will not be defrayed out of public funds, but must be borne by the claimants themselves; but if the claimant can establish that the presence of any witness is necessary on his behalf, and that he is without means to defray the expenses of the attendance of the witness, the amount of such expenses, according to the tariff laid down for witnesses' expenses in civil cases in the Court of a Resident Magistrate, may be authorized by you, and paid, but shall be recoverable from any amount ultimately paid to the claimant. The costs of any witness summoned by you may be paid according to the same tariff.

28. All claims made by anyone which have been dealt with by the Military Compensation Boards, Repatriation Commissions, or any persons authorized to assess claims, should be collected by you in one schedule, so as to show the total amounts claimed by each person, with the assessment made thereon. The schedule should

also show the amounts (if any) which the claimant has received in payment of any portion of the claim.

In order to enable this to be done all claims already assessed or registered by the military authorities will be sent, and those forwarded to the Judicial Commission will be returned to you. Of the cases which have already been reviewed by this Commission there are a few in which it will be necessary for you to reconsider the claims, with the view of ascertaining the fund against which they rank. The Secretary of the Judicial Commission, in returning them to you, will call your attention to any in which the claimant appears to be a 'protected burgher' entitled to participate in the Military Compensation Fund.

29. Forms of the schedule will be supplied to you, and a copy of it should be forwarded by you after assessment to the Secretary of the Judicial Commission.

30. No claim shall be considered unless (1) it is in respect of direct war losses, such as the loss of goods, stock, etc., or damage to buildings, fences, etc., the personal property of the claimant; and (2) it is presented by the person who actually suffered the loss to which it refers, or, if he be dead, by some person representing his estate.

31. The following classes of claims cannot be accepted as ranking against any of the three funds:

(*a*) The claims of limited companies or large firms.

(*b*) The claims of persons not claiming in their own right, but as representing communities, corporations, or other collective bodies of persons—*e.g.*, on behalf of Churches, Freemasons, and the like.

(*c*) Claims in respect of salary alleged to be due from the Government of either of the late Republics.

(*d*) Claims in respect of services rendered to the members of the commandos of either of the late Republics—*e.g.*, as farriers, etc.

(*e*) Claims in respect of loss of horses used by the claimant, and which either died, were killed, or lost by him whilst on commando; or for loss of waggons or stock used or kept by the claimant on commando, and which were then destroyed or captured by the British forces.

(*f*) Claims in respect of loss of horses, cattle, or other stock

which had been either taken by the claimant as booty, or which had been received by him as his share of booty taken by others, and which were subsequently either requisitioned for the use of the forces of either of the late Republics or captured or destroyed by the British forces.

(*g*) Claims in respect of the damage or destruction of growing crops or trees, other than fruit-trees or large plantations.

(*h*) Claims in respect of notes issued by the Government of the late South African Republic under Law 1 of 1900, and received by the claimant otherwise than in return for valuable consideration received by the Government of either of the late Republics or their forces.

(*i*) Claims in respect of such notes by the claimant in payment of horses, cattle, or other goods sold to the Government of the late Republics, but which horses, cattle, or goods had been captured from the British or looted during the war by the claimant.

(*j*) Claims, of whatever nature, made by rebels.

32. It would be impossible to assess accurately the value of animals in respect of the loss or destruction of which claims are made; and it is desirable that there should, as far as possible, be uniformity of assessment in the different districts, so that claimants will be placed as nearly as may be on an equal footing.

## APPENDIX H (II.)

### Instructions issued on 14th March, 1903.

In assessing claims it is essential that the full facts on which a claim is based should be ascertained. It is also essential that the facts, when ascertained, should be shown in the notes of evidence taken in support of the claim. In many cases a close cross-examination of the claimant and other witnesses in support of the claim will be necessary before the facts can be elicited.

It is, therefore, requested that special attention may be given to recording the full evidence in support of each claim, and the details thereof, and, where possible, corroborative evidence should be produced.

Special attention is drawn to the following points, which should be observed in connection with the assessment of claims :

1. Fraudulent Claims :

   In cases where a claimant prefers a fraudulent claim, the fact that he preferred such fraudulent claim shall debar such claimant from receiving any compensation for any other claim or claims preferred by him, even though such other claims be not fraudulent. Evidence as to any other claim or claims which a claimant may have filed with other commissions should be taken from all claimants, and such evidence should be shown on the proceedings. In cases where other claims have been filed with other commissions, a note to that effect should be made on the outside of the jacket of the claim.

2. Protected Burghers :

   Claimants who allege that they were protected burghers should be closely cross-examined as to the date of their surrender, under what proclamation or promise they so surrendered, what their occupation, and where their places of residence were between the date of surrender and the declaration of peace. To entitle a person to be classed as a protected burgher evidence should be produced to show under what proclamation or promise he surrendered, and to show that the surrender was in consequence of such proclamation or promise, and took place within a reasonable time of the date of issue of such proclamation or promise, also to show who was the person making such promise. The Commander-in-Chief, or other responsible military officer, was the only person entitled to make any such promise.

3. Buildings and Furniture :

   Where a claim for damage or destruction of buildings or loss or damage to furniture is made, the commission should be careful to obtain evidence of the age and the state of repair in which the buildings and furniture were at the time the damage or destruction occurred. Evidence should also be taken as to the materials and dimensions of the buildings

in respect of which the claim is made. The original cost of buildings and furniture should also be ascertained. Where an amount is claimed for repairs, the quantity of material necessary for such repairs should be ascertained.

4. Government Notes :

Where a claim is in respect of Government notes, evidence of the actual cost price of the goods or other consideration for such Government notes should be obtained and shown on the proceedings. Where goods are charged for at ordinary trade prices, evidence should be taken to show what percentage was added to the cost price in order to make up the trade price. Evidence should be taken to show under what conditions, from whom, and for what consideration a claimant received the Government notes claimed for.

5. Large Firms :

In connection with claims by large firms, evidence on the following points should be taken and shown on the record of the evidence :

(*a*) The average value of stock in hand.

(*b*) The annual turnover during the three years before the war.

(*c*) The annual working expenses during the same period.

(*d*) The annual net profit.

It is requested that evidence be taken as to the position of each claimant, and as to the present position of such claimant should no compensation be paid for loss sustained.

In all cases where the claimant is a business man, the name and address of a partner or other persons interested in the business must be set forth.

6. British Subjects :

In all cases where a claim is by a person alleging himself to be a British subject full proof as to nationality should be obtained, and evidence taken to show what the occupation and conduct of the claimant were prior to and during the war, and whether he traded with, or aided the forces of, the

late Republics, and if so, in what manner and to what extent he so traded with or aided the said forces.

N.B.—Cases have arisen in which a claim for prospective profits has been recommended for payment. In view of the fact that advances may be made against such a claim in consequence of such recommendation, your attention is particularly drawn to the fact that no allowance must be made in respect of problematical or prospective losses.

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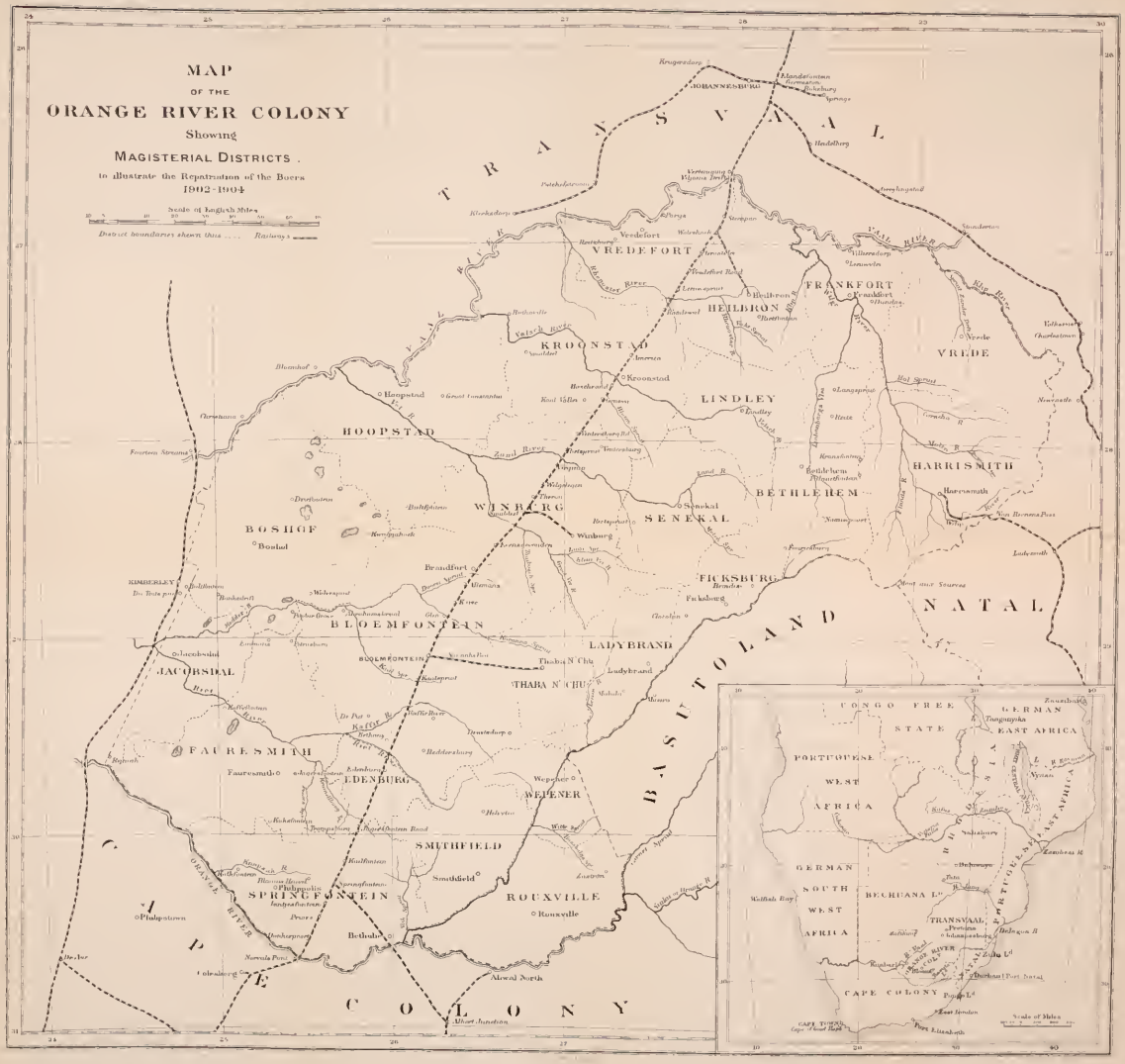
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MAP
OF THE
ORANGE RIVER COLONY
Showing
MAGISTERIAL DISTRICTS.
to illustrate the Repatriation of the Boers
1902-1904
Scale of English Miles
District boundaries shown thus
Railways
TRANSVAAL
BASUTOLAND
NATAL
C A P E C O L O N Y
JOHANNESBURG
Heidelberg
Vereeniging
Klerksdorp
Potchefstroom
VREDEFORT
Vredefort
Frankfort
HEILBRON
Heilbron
KROONSTAD
Kroonstad
LINDLEY
Lindley
VREDE
HOOPSTAD
Hoopstad
WINBURG
Winburg
SENEKAL
BETHLEHEM
HARRISMITH
Harrismith
BOSHOF
Boshof
KIMBERLEY
BLOEMFONTEIN
Bloemfontein
LADYBRAND
Ladybrand
THABA N'CHU
JACOBSDAL
Jacobsdal
FAURESMITH
Fauresmith
EDENBURG
Edenburg
WEPENER
Wepener
SMITHFIELD
Smithfield
ROUXVILLE
Rouxville
SPRINGFONTEIN
Springfontein
Philippolis
Bethulie
Aliwal North
Albert Junction
FICKSBURG
Ficksburg
Brandfort
Senekal
Harrismith
Ladysmith
Newcastle
Orange River
Vaal River
Modder River
Caledon River
Zand River
Riet River
Basutoland
CONGO FREE STATE
GERMAN EAST AFRICA
PORTUGUESE WEST AFRICA
GERMAN SOUTH WEST AFRICA
BECHUANA L.
RHODESIA
TRANSVAAL
Pretoria
Johannesburg
Zambesi R.
Victoria Falls
CAPE COLONY
Cape Town
Port Elizabeth
Durban
Port Natal
Scale of Miles

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